

Choosing the Right Bat

First things first. A great bat will not turn a poor hitter into a great hitter. If the player's hitting mechanics are all wrong, no bat will help.

While a good bat will not make a player better, a poor bat (or a bat that is not suitable for the player) will be another roadblock to a player's hitting success.

When choosing a bat, a number of factors must be taken into account. These are the size/strength of the player, the level of skill, the type of bat (material), the bat weight, bat length, barrel size, etc. Today you will find bats designed specifically for Tee Ball, Junior, Little League, Senior League, High School, and College.

According to *CoachSoftball.com* for young players, especially new inexperienced, we advise that the lighter the bat the better. Player's need to be able to generate enough bat speed to effectively hit the ball. When facing a fastball pitcher, professional players are known to go to a lighter bat to maintain bat speed and get in front of the pitch. So it's that much more important that a young, less experienced player have a light enough bat to swing with enough bat speed to hit the ball.

As a rule of thumb, aluminum bats are lighter than wooden. Additionally, aluminum bats can provide more "pop" of the baseball off the bat, and are much more durable (therefore cost effective) than wooden bats. Keep in mind that bats today are becoming increasingly high tech and expensive - with youth bats reaching \$200+ price levels. Remember the most expensive bat is not necessarily the best bat; especially with young players. You don't have to spend a lot of money for a good bat.

When shopping for a bat, have your child hold the bat straight and to their side out (parallel to the ground) with their "hitting" hand (right hand for right-handed hitters, left of left-handed hitters). If the player cannot hold the bat straight out for 20 seconds or so without the arm starting to shake and the bat dropping, it's too heavy.

Unfortunately your player will not get a good feel for the bat by simply holding it and taking a few practice swings. The best way to get the feel for a bat is to swing at live pitches. As your players get older and the importance of the bat grows, take them to the batting cages and have them hit with a wide range of batting cage bats that are available. You should be able to see right away which bat is too small, too big, or too heavy.

Worth Sports conducted a study in which they determined the best bat weights for hitters, based on their height.

The table below summarizes their findings.

Bat Weight Guidelines:

A. High School & College Baseball		B. Youth League Baseball (11-12 yrs)		C. Youth League Baseball (8-10 yr. olds)	
Player Height (in.)	Best Bat Wt (oz.)	Player Weight (lbs.)	Best Bat Wt (oz.)	Player Height (in.)	Best Bat Wt (oz.)
66	27	70	18	48	16
68	27.5	80	19	50	16.5
70	28	90	19.5	52	17
72	29	100	20	54	17.5
74	30	110	20.5	56	18
76	30.5	120	21	58	18.5
Formula: Height/3 + 5		130	21.5	60	19
		140	22	Formula: Height/4 + 4	
		150	23		
		Formula: Weight/16 + 14			

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