

DAN HENNIGAN

Get Angled



**FOUR VITAL CHECKPOINTS IN YOUR SWING YOUR FAVORITE
HITTER IS DOING AND YOUR COACH IS IGNORING SO YOU CAN
MAKE MORE CONTACT AND HIT WITH GREATER POWER.**



Get Angled: Four vital checkpoints in your swing your favorite hitter is doing and your coach is ignoring so you can make more contact and hit with greater power.

A FREE ebook by Dan Hennigan.

Who is Dan Hennigan? Good question. If the skills he teaches are not in your repertoire for hitting baseballs and softballs—your hitting production (along with making consistent contact, driving the ball further, hitting for power etc.) probably isn't too good. Or maybe you've gotten lucky, or have natural talent in your motor patterns...I don't know. But as you progress through this game and the players around you get better, specifically the pitchers, you will need better strategies to succeed as a hitter.

Dan is a MiLB standout at this point in his career. He was recently placed on the DL after a recent stint with the L.A. Dodgers organization due to shoulder surgery (he might have the tightest muscles I've ever seen on someone who made it as far

as he did), but he will bounce back. Dan is short guy—one who you might think wouldn't be able to hit for power—but he does, and he teaches it so very well. In case you like audio books, or podcasts, go here:

<http://drchrismckenzie.com/danhennigan/> and listen to my interview with Dan.

If you have any kind of trouble when it comes to hitting, Dan is your man. Enjoy this step-by-step process and learn more than the basics, of how to hit for real power. Enter, Dan:

You know the “chop down” swing? “Knob to the ball” and “Squish the bug?” Well, I had it all mastered. I was part Bruce Lee, part Terminix Bug Squasher. By the time I was eleven I was the poster child for the theory. Peep the form, here →



You're talking to a Little League All-Star chief. Do you see that arm definition?! Those 85 pound pitchers, with their fastballs that couldn't break a window pane and their father-taught, wrist-snap, spin-balls that only appeared to have movement because of a thing called gravity? I owned that weak stuff. With my perfect mechanics and a decade of muscle memory to build upon before draft day, I felt like the sky was the limit.

But high school came and went. And while a little speed and some solid defense helped me make it to the collegiate level, my hitting was nothing more than singles at best. After years of weight lifting programs (I know it's surprising I'd need to work out after seeing the guns I was working with as a kid), physical and mental maturation, and thousands of hacks taken with each swing rooted in a linear principle and a tight downward hand path that optimally finished with me catching the ball a few feet in front of the plate, I'd become no more than a slap hitting pest.

Don't get me wrong, I loved my hitting coach. I still do. He's an amazing guy who lives, eats, and breathes baseball. I just couldn't help but feel that my mechanics looked different than the top hitters in the world.

At my best, I led team on-base percentages with low liners and the rare extra base hit. At my worst, I was a ground-out waiting to happen. Hard 90, harder bat-rack slam. Hard 90, harder water cooler beat down.

Quick hands on D, a little speed, and my mastered karate chop, managed to get me signed in the Atlantic League: the top indy ball league in the country. It's a grab bag of World Series ring bearers, current big leaguers who opted out of contracts for a chance to resign later in the season with new teams, past "can't miss" studs that just kept... missing, deserving young talent that got stuck with the wrong organization, freaks of nature who can't figure it out upstairs, baseball geniuses that can't stay healthy, and everything in between.

Injuries, affiliated signings, releases, and a losing streak induced, sphincter-clenching, front office desperation led to me batting leadoff, straight out of

college, on a team filled with AAA and big league hitters. Pitch selection, a chip on my shoulder the size of my massive arms in that first pic, and adrenaline resulted in me hitting right around .400 my first month. During this unconscious stretch of hitting, I refused to acknowledge the fact that each team was putting together a scouting report for me the way they had for EVERY OTHER HITTER IN THE LEAGUE. Sure enough, pitching adjustments were made. I recognized the shift. I knew what they were doing. I started cheating to specific pitches and still couldn't barrel up what I knew was coming. I backed away from the plate to help things out. I started earlier, committed earlier and could even HEAR some catchers set up inside on me. I was confused, embarrassed, absolutely livid, and worried about my future. I flat out wasn't getting the results I wanted. And by results I mean the shallow liners that I expected to CRUSH just a little bit past the middle infielders. Don't judge, that's what I had done all my life.

During my second pro season, I mixed horrible inabilities to make adjustments with decisions that led to season altering elbow issues. This mixture brewed a nice little cocktail of horrendous baseball stats. As a player who only gets paychecks because of his on-base percentage, I actually went through a stage

of desperation where I said, “screw it, I’m just gonna hack at everything”. So I did. Definitely didn’t work.

What’s that first step again, admitting you have a problem? Well, Houston...

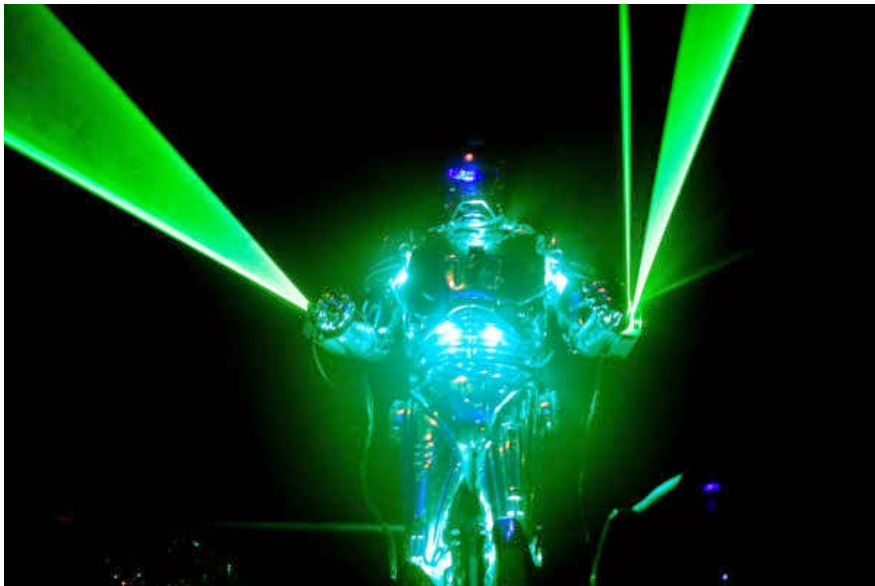
I began watching my teammates that were successful. They all had different stances, different heights, weights, they liked different types of pitches and locations, but after a full season of observing, listening, breaking down, and filming each and every successful hitter I played with, especially those that had reached the Show, I learned they all had one thing in common. What was most noteworthy about “those common things” they were doing was something that legitimately gave me a weird feeling in my stomach. By the time the practice round of hitting got to our catcher, I realized it was something I never worked on. I never practiced “those things”. My decade of muscle memory never focused on “those things”. Then I felt worse when I realized none of my youth, high school, or even top travel teammates were working on “those things”. I found myself getting frustrated when I thought about how many different baseball academies I attended, and even worked for, that had the same goofy little cookie-cutter phrases that were emphasized daily and beat into our young

and malleable baseball minds. “Squish the bug!” “Chop down!” “Get on top!”
“Catch the ball out front!”

I zoned back in on the pregame routine of the former Baltimore Orioles catcher who was hitting .320 while leading the Atlantic League in homeruns. He stood in the cage, mashing baseballs with a point of contact that echoed around the entire facility and made stadium ground-crew members recoil as they walked by. I finally grew angry as I came to the realization that what he was doing, “those things” he was working on, just like the former Atlanta Brave who stepped out of the cage before him was working on, and “those things” the New York Yankee before him was doing, and “those things” the Houston Astro before him was doing, “those things” they were all doing; no coach in my area was teaching “those things”. But it couldn’t just be my area could it? Other kids around the country had to have been fed the same pile of safe-swinging mediocrity. I made a promise that I’d do everything possible so as many players as I could reach would never have to wish they could retrieve a wasted decade of hard work lost on the wrong mechanics. I made a promise that I’d show hitters “those things”.

Angles and Lasers

So I've explained how I got here; how I've reached my greater purpose, my vow to save baseball playing children and better the world!! OK, maybe not that intense but you get the idea. I explained how I came about my realization that there was a better way to hit, but I've yet to begin divulging the fundamental mechanics that each of the big league hitters actually practice. This "Angles and Lasers" segment will be solely dedicated to the basic principles that make up an elite hitter. As you progress, so too will the details. We will expound into the far more nuanced aspects of each and every swing, but for now, we will become basic laser shooting line drive hitters...



I'll get back to that later.

As previously mentioned, I dissected each feature of the body, throughout the course of the swing, to the point that I was able to mirror the process. Unfortunately, when you're working with a teenager without any previous knowledge of the mechanics, you can't just say, "make your swing look like this". Most body awareness is not that simple and they wind up looking ridiculous and the parent who accompanied is pissed that they just forked over money for what seemed to make their son worse. Also, this is typically such a different concept than what has previously been taught to the hitter, that the hitter (and usually the parent) questions why they should ever do this. Coaching doesn't work effectively like this. So I began to simplify the explanation. I broke down the swing into four segments, each with equally valued importance. However, this wasn't always enough.

For those who are unaware of what that first session with a new hitting instructor is like, let me explain: It begins with an awkward sizing up of me, the instructor. This is followed by a skeptical refusal to accept anything different than what they've previously heard. Finally, they build up varying degrees of defense because, put simply, humans are afraid of the unknown to the point that they either want to leave or their heads explode. Combine this with the fact that I am a stranger telling your child what to do, things can get testy. But parents, I get

it. This is the beauty of being a parent. "I want the best for my kid and if you mess with them I mess with you".

Being the instructor, working with your beloved baby, I'm going to be tested. I **SHOULD** be tested. Anytime you are coached you should **ALWAYS ASK WHY** and anytime you coach you should always have a reason why. So I built a "Here's the Proof" section into my initial session. I not only explain the four fundamental aspects of the swing to the hitter and whoever came with him, but I explain why each phase is beneficial. Lastly, I show examples of professional hitters completing each of these facets. When done correctly, in just a matter of minutes, I have a trustful team working WITH me, accepting the process, displaying improved results, and most importantly, putting themselves in an excellent position to continuously grow and improve as a hitter. This is a different, but similar, version to my "Here's the Proof" section I show my clients.

The four aspects of the swing fall into two categories; Angles and Lasers.

Angles

The Angles are just another way of explaining the direction the bat is facing or the slant at which the hitter is placing the barrel. While these two important Angles must be accomplished, things like:

Hand position



Bat waggle



and pre-pitch hijinx...



...all have very little bearing, and vary from big league hitter to big league hitter.

The important thing is every successful hitter completes each of these two Angles

you're about see...

Angle 1



Angle 1 entails the barrel of the bat tilted towards the pitcher with the handle of the bat facing the catcher. The barrel may end up facing slightly

towards the opposite field direction. That's fine. The bottom hand (in the case of a right handed hitter, it will be the left hand) works as a fulcrum that will eventually allow the barrel to enter the hitting zone and remain there for an extended period of time. Each hitter has a different style that they start with but the functional purpose of this step is to begin to create torque and a whip-like sensation with the barrel. Some elite hitters may not appear to set this first angle while they are waiting for the pitch but if you were to slow down their swing, you'd see a consistent Angle 1 being set as they gather themselves and prepare to read the pitch exiting the pitcher's hand.

Take note of these pro examples of Angle 1:

Triple Crown Winner Miguel Cabrera



Jose Bautista



Mike Trout



Bryce Harper



Robinson Cano



Babe Ruth



Hank Aaron

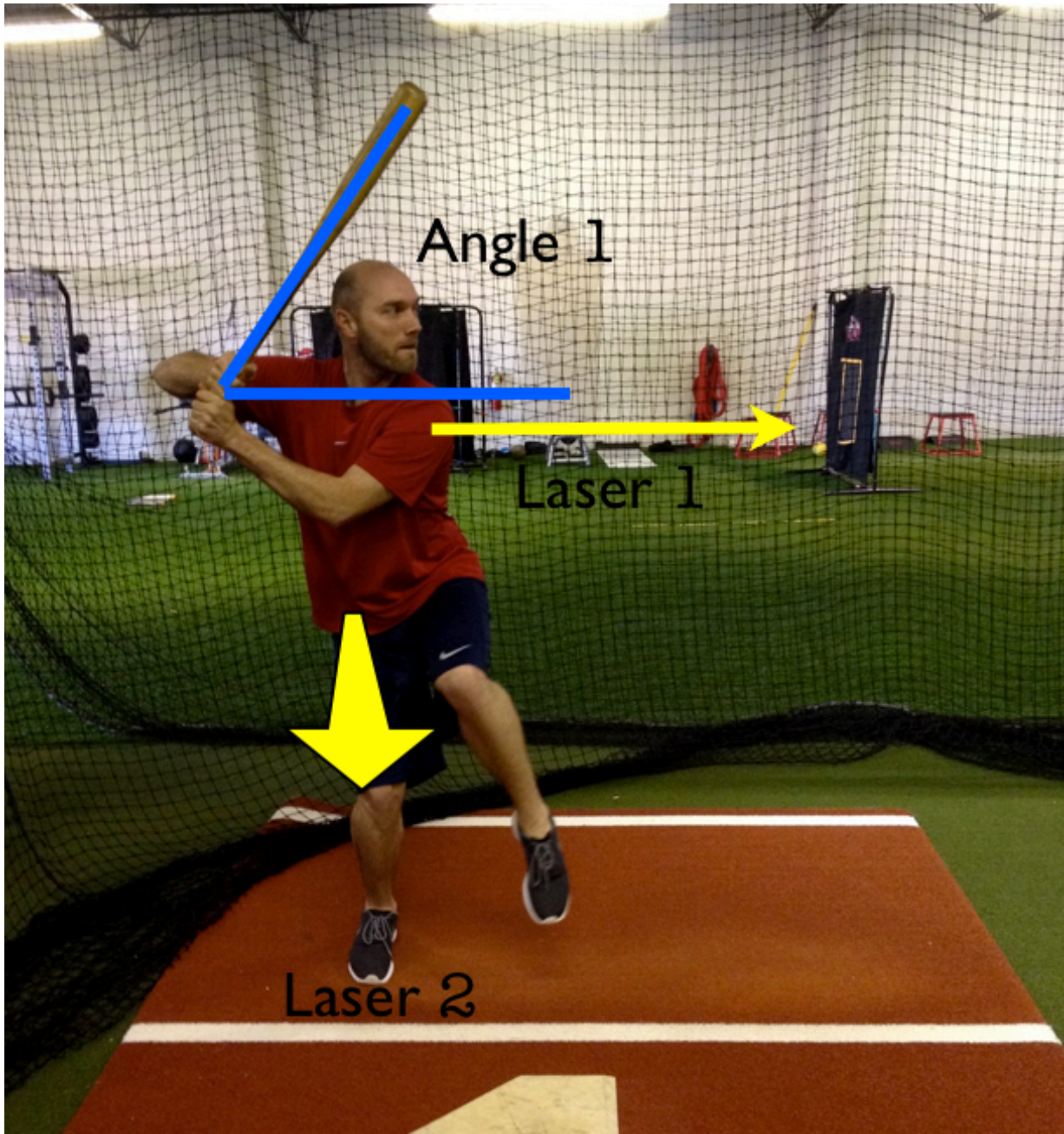


As you can see, all of these guys, for the past century mind you, have an angled bat gearing up for torque. Picture a towel you're about to snap at an unlucky victim. In order to get the proper whip effect you bring the hands back and let the top of the towel flow from front to back before it violently lashes towards its intended target at the end of the follow through. This is the same principle for the barrel of the bat. The barrel will be a whip that comes along at the very end of the swing once inertia has been created by the entire body. This first angle, Angle 1, is the initial step in order to achieve maximum whip, or bat

speed, depending how you'd like to word it. Now, we need to switch gears into Lasers for a bit...

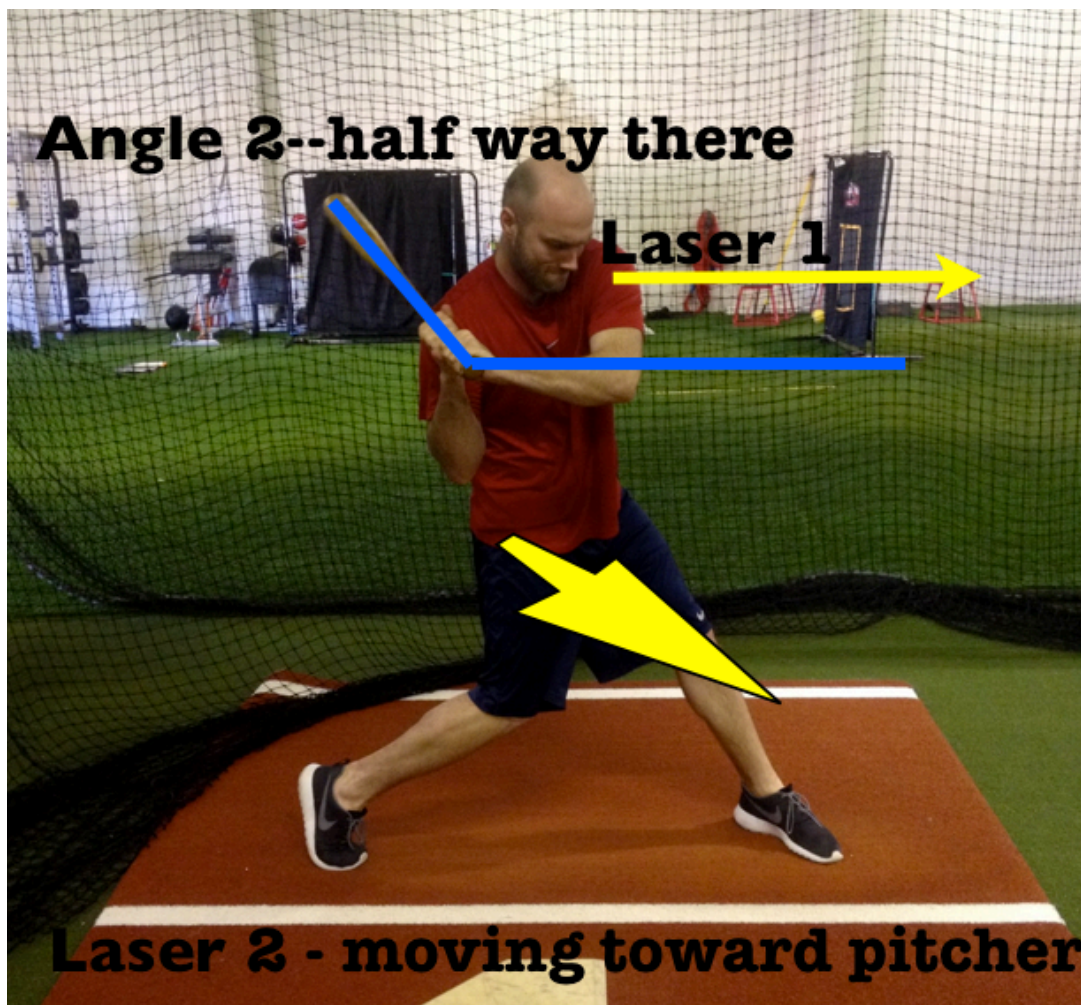
Lasers

After attempting to explain different parts of the swing to different age groups, I realized that many of my hitters were not fully comprehending what I meant when I said to create torque by using the core of the body as a conduit. The fact that I had to look up the word conduit before saying it is a solid example as to why a little league hitter may not understand what I'm trying to get him to do. Anyway, I began to make it more fun for the kids as well as an easier thing to visualize, understand, and perform. I gave my hitters superpowers. They each were equipped with two lasers, BUT!! the lasers would only work if both pointed towards their enemy at the same time. The enemy of all hitters is the pitcher! So let's get both lasers to the pitcher!! The first laser, cleverly named Laser 1, came off the hitters front shoulder, parallel to the ground. Laser 2 pointed straight off the back hip bone that protrudes from the pelvis.



Now we're getting there... As you can see above, Laser 1 is facing the pitcher and Laser 2 is facing the hot dog stand somewhere off the field, towards the first base line. Trust me, there's a hot dog stand over there. As aforementioned, Laser 2 is coming directly off that back part of the pelvis. These

two simple steps are happening while Angle 1 of the barrel is still in effect. But remember kids, the lasers only work to hit line drives as hard as possible if we get both of them to face the pitcher, right? In order for this to happen the hitter must be able to keep the upper body closed off and stable, with Laser 1 still facing the pitcher, while the lower body lets loose and begins to rotate in order to properly get Laser 2 also facing the enemy/pitcher. The more controlled you can keep your upper body and maintain Laser 1 locked in on the pitcher, the more violently you can unleash the lower half and Laser 2 towards the oncoming pitch! Let's watch as Laser 2 makes it's way into activation mode so both lasers can turn on...



Chase Utley



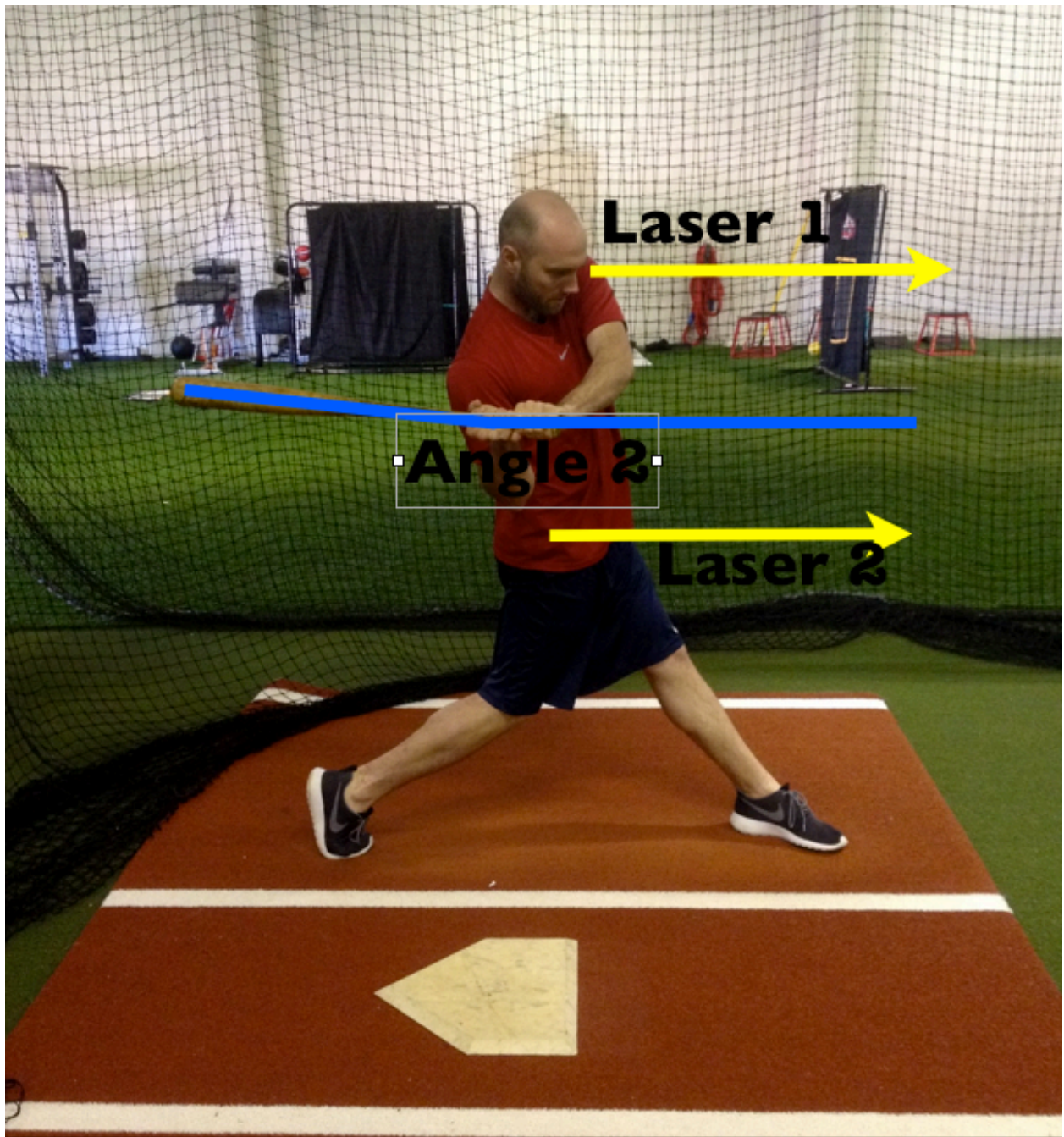
Giancarlo Stanton



This is a tweener stage between Angle 1 and Angle 2 as well as working both Lasers towards the pitcher. If you notice, Laser 2 has begun to make its way towards the pitch as the back elbow drops down, nearing the back rib. This simultaneous movement begins the whip process of the barrel towards the pitch.

If you look at the first picture again you'll see the hitters hands have barely moved, but the tip of the bat has moved back about 12-15 inches. This is due to the proper use of the bottom hand as a fulcrum, allowing an easy, fluid sway of the barrel from over the head into a nice slot quickly dropping towards the hitting zone in order to match the plane of the oncoming pitch.

Angle 2



Oh boy. Now we've done it...

Lasers have activated. Angle 2 has been set. The barrel is flattening out behind him as the rest of his body works through the ball. The bat will work on plane with the oncoming pitch and remain in the zone for as long as humanly possible. We're ready to unleash. This is the drive. The point of contact, the follow through, the bat toss and the pimp job are all important, sure, but THIS is the dirty work. This is where singles turn into doubles, where warning track flies turn into homeruns, runs batted in, games won, awards given, and scholarships are all earned. **This is Angled Hitting.** Now, granted, we are using still photos of a former D1 pitcher as our hitting example for these so it will look prettier, stronger, and all-around better than the exact picture we have here, but this is it! As you can see, because the hitter was able to keep his front shoulder in while letting the lower half work its way toward the pitch, both lasers were able to target the enemy. There is now such built up energy wanting to work towards the ball, the rest of the swing and the point of contact will be so fluid, effortless and smooth the ball will jump off the bat.

These following guys are all setting angle 2. Notice the hips forward and the barrel still back. This isn't a loopy swing. This is a swing that remains on plane with the pitch throughout. It's a flat bat or even a slight upwards angle with

immense inertia on a crash course with the unfortunate baseball. If you don't believe me, believe these historically monstrous hitters...

Ichiro Suzuki



Barry Bonds



Ken Griffey Jr.



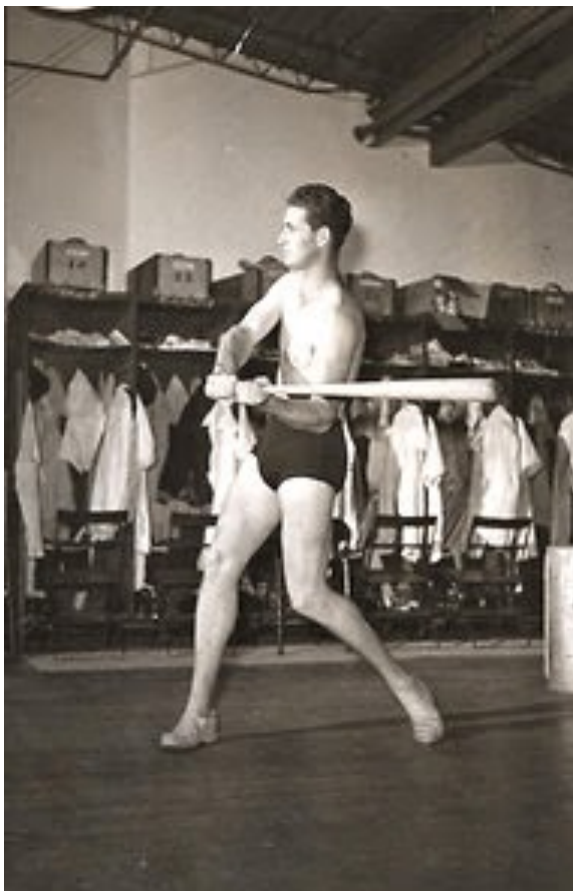
Ryan Braun



Joe Dimaggio



Ted Williams in his underwear



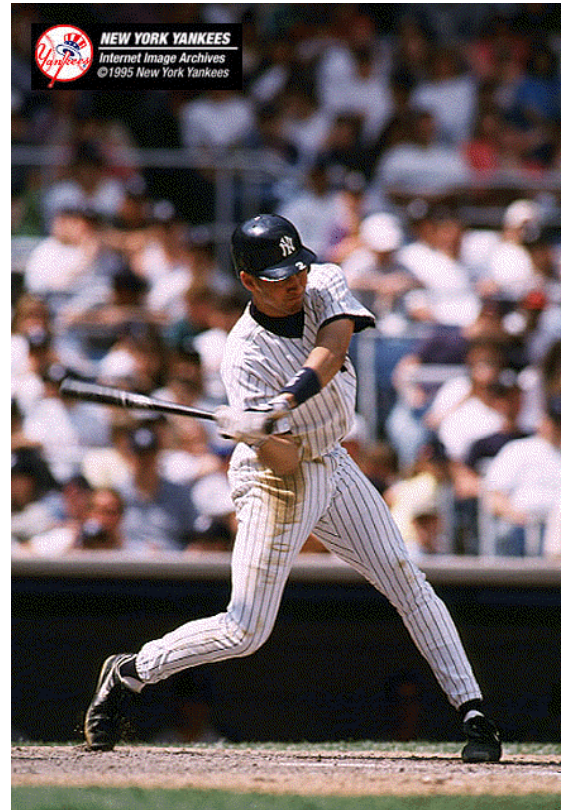
Mickey Mantle



Will Myers 2013 Rookie of the Year



Derek Jeter



Whether it was 90 years ago or this year, these guys are all doing the same thing. They all get both lasers facing the pitcher by keeping the front shoulder closed while the lower half aggressively works towards the pitch. They all start with Angle 1 before dropping the back elbow off the back rib and flattening the barrel in order to set Angle 2. This isn't just some coincidence. This isn't by accident. This is what the elite hitters do. Pure and simple.

These four aspects of the swing, the 2 angles and the 2 lasers, are how I've helped players comprehend the basic movements of the best hitters. It's important to understand I said basic. These angles and lasers should be considered checkpoints that must be passed through during the swing. How we get to each laser, and especially how we get to each angle involves far more intricate details and variables. Depending on flexibility, body type, strength, top or bottom hand dominance, etc. all will come into play. As we get further along we'll divulge far more about the swing, the approach, the mental side of the game and so on... But this is the basics. These are the tools we can build upon.

I'll finish this up with some pictures at the point of contact. You'll notice none of them have their arms extended, none of them are reaching out to make contact. Nobody is looking at the "Power V" or a wrist snap. It's a simple rotation through the core while the barrel works from behind the hitter through the zone. Picture some karate guy trying to break a block of wood. They punch through the wood. They wouldn't extend their arm all the way out and then make contact with the wood after extension. That'd be stupid. He'd just be a weird tapping a piece of wood. Not breaking through it. As contact is made the back arm is slightly bent and has the ability to push through the ball...

Josh Hamilton



Derek Jeter



Joe Mauer



Albert Pujols



Pete Rose



Miguel Cabrera

(Take note of what he did to this poor baseball)



“This is what the elite do. This is getting Angled.”

To learn more about the Angled principles and how you or your son can begin hitting further and harder than ever, contact Dan Hennigan by email at dhenny1@me.com, or twitter [@Dan_Hennigan](https://twitter.com/Dan_Hennigan).

Dan presents locally and online, and gives hitting lessons throughout the Tri-State (Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware) Area. If interested please contact him by email.

Dan Hennigan played for Chester County Carpenter Cup 3 different years and finished with the most total hits recorded in Carpenter Cup career. Dan played at Franklin Pierce University winning numerous offensive awards prior to being signed by the Atlantic League. He played for the Somerset Patriots and Camden Riversharks before realizing common hitting cues that we’ve all heard turned out to be wrong. Or at least misinterpreted. Hennigan began videoing his teammates, most specifically those with Major League time under their belt and noticed some constants in the swing that hadn’t ever been mentioned throughout

his youth and professional time. He broke down what he was noticing into what he calls Angles and Lasers and began implementing his theories with hitters. He now works with professional hitters from the Red Sox, Phillies, Rays, Yankees, and Mets as well as multiple college athletes from elite Division 1 programs. Hennigan took his hitting principles and, despite health issues, earned a spot in the Dodgers farm system in 2015 as a shortstop before finally being put on the DL for shoulder surgery. Dan uses video and motion analysis to breakdown how the body works and how to develop the most torque possible while ensuring good quality contact against high velocity. Contact him by email at dhenny1@me.com .