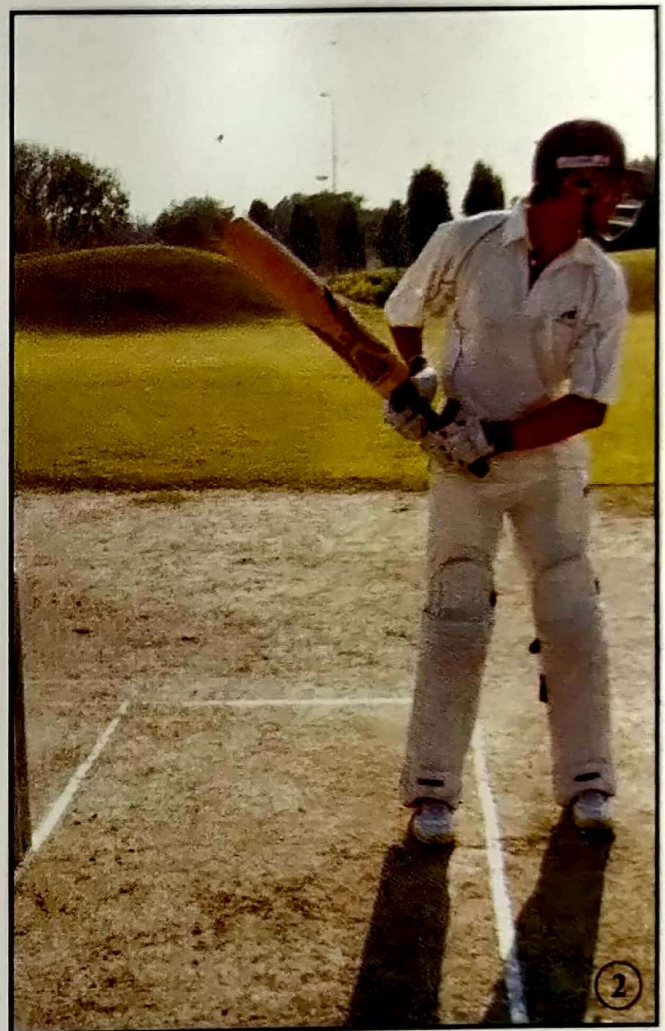
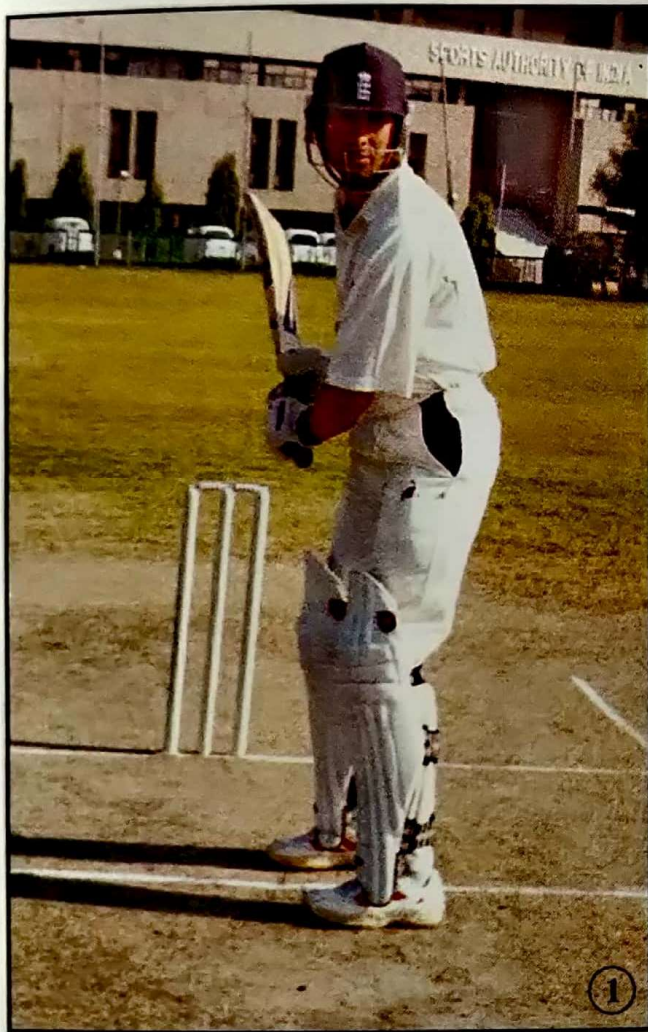


THE BACK-LIFT

The back-lift, or the pick up as some call it, is of far more importance than the young batsmen realise. It is the hinge of good batting and an integral part of the stroke. It is quite obvious that the way a bat is lifted must affect its downswing. It is not natural to pick the bat straight, therefore every batsman must make effort to pick up the bat correctly.



The first movement in playing any stroke is to start the back-lift and this should be made as or just before the bowler releases the ball. Never be late otherwise you will rush through your stroke. The timing of the pick will depend mainly on the pace of the bowler. The faster the bowler the earlier the back-lift should be. Never take the bat too far back and up in the back-lift. It should be far enough for you to have power in the stroke and full control of the bat. It will also help you to time your strokes correctly. Never use a bat which you cannot wield



Sachin Tendulkar's perfect back lift

with ease and comfort. Here let me remind you that a bat of correct balance is a great aid to your batting.

The control of the top hand is absolutely essential because if the bottom hand dominates the back-lift will be towards third slip and gully or even wider and a loop will be formed while swinging the bat down.

The great Australian batsman, Greg Chappell, had a very straight back-lift and Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid are also good examples to follow.

THE FOLLOWING POINTS SHOULD BE OBSERVED IN THE BACK-LIFT:

- Pick up the bat with both the hands but the top hand should be dominating while the bottom hand plays merely the supporting role.
- Many good batsmen find it natural to lift the bat in the direction of the first or even second slip but all of them bring it down straight by looping at the top of the back-lift to enable them to play down the line of the ball and that is what matters the most in the ultimate analysis.
- Ideally, of course, the back-lift should be straight above the stumps simply because straighter the back-lift the greater the prospect of the whole stroke being played safely.
- The wrist of the top hand cocks which naturally opens the face of the bat towards cover point.
- The elbows, while picking the bat up, must be kept near the body because it will enable you to swing the bat close to the body.
- The front elbow will remain pointing down the pitch.
- It is imperative to retain the poise and balance of the body while picking the bat up. Many batsmen lose their body balance at this vital stage. It is also vital to keep the head still otherwise you may have difficulty in focusing and tracking the moving ball.

- At the top of the back-lift the toe of the bat will be higher than the hands.
- The front shoulder rolls slightly downwards as the bat is lifted.
- A very tall batsman may find it more comfortable and relaxing to stand with the bat slightly off the ground.

You can practice your back-lift correctly in front of a mirror where you can watch if your back-lift is both straight and high. Please also check that your head and body remain quite still while you do it. Another useful method to ensure straight back-lift is to practice it while using only the top hand on the bat.

COMMON FAULTS IN THE BACK-LIFT

- Late in starting the back-lift.
- Low back-lift.
- The left arm bending too much too early.
- No cocking of the wrist.
- Cocking of the wrists too early.
- The dominance of the bottom hand.
- Arms moving away from the body.