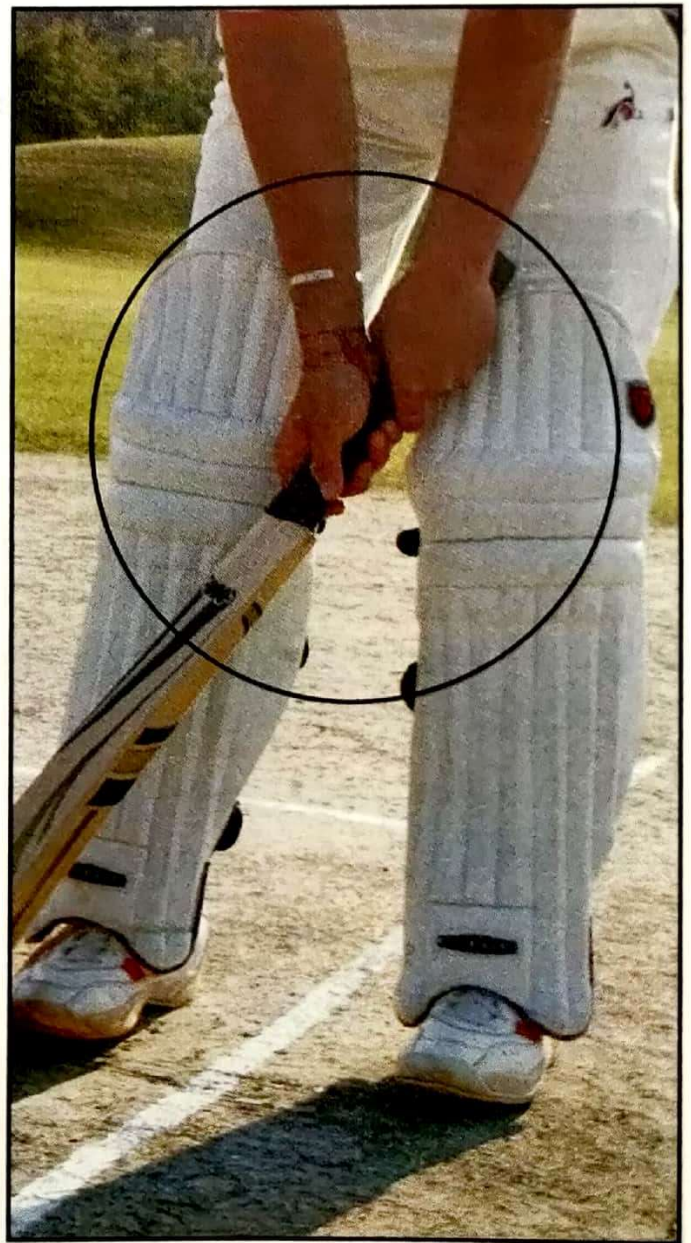


THE GRIP

Well begun is half done, they say. Good batting begins with a correct grip. The way a batsman holds the bat in his hands has a great bearing on how he would shape later on because numerous shot execution defects have their origin here only. Some batsmen have succeeded despite an unorthodox grip but let me assure you that you let the fundamentals guide your decision in the matter of grip before starting to experiment. The hands should grip the handle from about the middle of it because to have them too low will choke the bat and too high will lose control at the top of the back lift. Your grip must enable you to swing the bat like a pendulum along a straight line.



THE RECOMMENDED GRIP HAS THE FOLLOWING FEATURES:

- The hands are close together with the little finger of the bottom hand nearly touching the index finger of the top hand. The top hand should be near the end of the handle with no more than about an inch of the handle protruding beyond the top hand. The fingers and thumbs of both the hands should be well round the handle with the top hand gripping firmly. The bottom hand should support it rather than squeezing it.
- When the bat is rested against the inside of the front thigh the back of the top hand faces somewhere between mid-off and extra cover.
- The "Vees" formed by the index finger and the thumb of the top hand is directly over the corresponding V of the bottom hand and the line of these Vees' arrow heads is between the splice and the outer edge of the bat.

Many junior players develop a wrong grip because the bats that they use are far too heavy for them. It is better to use a bat that is too light than one too heavy and unwieldy.

COMMON FAULTS IN THE GRIP

- Having the hands far too apart on the bat handle. This prevents the hands from working together in powerful unison and may also lead to the domination by the bottom hand.
- The back of the top hand pointing towards point, making it difficult to have full follow through, thus restricting stroke play.
- Too strong a grip on the bottom hand.
- Too weak a grip on the top hand.
- Gripping the handle too high up as it would reduce the control of the bat.
- The hands being too low on the handle which causes the arc of the swing of the bat being reduced considerably. It also encourages crouching too far over the bat in the stance which may result in the batsman falling over to the off side during strokes.