

## Knocking In

### **Knocking in; Why & How to get the best performance out of your new bat.**

Info from [www.laverwood.co.nz](http://www.laverwood.co.nz) follow the link for the full article.

"At the stage when the bat is purchased there are different ways of preparing your bat for the knocking in process. I recommend the following process - repeated trials in bat factories has shown me that this works far better than all other methods.

Raw linseed oil should be used to moisten the surface of the bat and enable the fibres to become supple and knit together, forming an elastic surface. This is more likely to stretch on impact, rather than crack. Raw linseed is used, as it stays moist for longer than boiled linseed. About a teaspoonful should be applied to the surface of the bat.

I recommend that oil should be applied 3 times before the process of compressing the face begins. Each coat of oil should be about a teaspoon full. Spread the oil over the face of the bat using a small rag or your fingers (always discard the rag after each application as it can spontaneously combust). Spread leftover linseed oil over the edges and toe of the bat. Let each coat of oil soak in overnight and repeat the process.

When the three coats of oil have been applied the knocking in process can begin. This should be done using a Hardwood bat mallet. This provides much better performance than a ball mallet, and the speeds up the process.

Start by hitting the middle of the bat just hard enough to create a dent. [This is surprisingly hard]. Hold the bat up to the light to see if you are making a dent. Gradually compress the face of the bat around this dent so the face of the bat is level and you cannot see the initial dent any more.

The edges require special attention; they need to be rounded off so that the hard new ball cannot damage them too much. The edges should be struck at 45 degrees to the face so that the mallet can compress the willow. Similar to the face make one dent on the edge, and then gradually even out the edge so that the whole surface has a smooth, rounded appearance.

If the bat is hit at 90 degrees to the face it reduces the width of the bat and is covering an area not mechanically pressed. The likelihood of cracking increases and you should not be hitting the ball flush on the edge in any case.

With a hardwood bat mallet the knocking in process should take from between 10 to 15 sessions of about 10 minutes each. Once you have completed this process, as a guide to see if the bat is ready for play take it into the nets and play a few shots with an old ball. If the bat is showing very deep seam marks to the point of almost cracking the face of the bat then it needs more compressing. One will always get seam marks on the face of the bat; they should not be too deep. "