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Secret Batting Weapon

Sunglasses-like teaching aid helps players keep their eyes on the ball

January 2007: Just in time for the baseball and softball season, MSS Performance, a West Virginia-based company specializing in vision-based sports training products, has introduced the I-ON Eye Trainer, a sunglasses-like teaching aid designed to enhance performance at the plate.

How it works. By blocking a batter's peripheral vision, the I-ON Eye Trainer forces the eye to follow the trajectory of the ball from point of release all the way into the hitting zone.

"It's physiologically impossible for the human eye to continuously track a ball at speeds over 21 mph," says Dr. Gregory Moore, inventor of the I-ON and chief technology officer at MSS Performance. "The I-ON gives the player a visual reference so that they can embed the proper muscle-memory response and ultimately improve their hitting."

Moore, an optometrist who also served as team eye doctor for the Chicago Cubs organization from 1989-1992, says the patented adjustable lenses and nosepiece allow for a one-size-fits-all system. "The I-ON accommodates hitters age seven and up and can be used over pre-

scription lenses," says Moore. "It was developed for training in a soft-toss, slow-paced setting to maximize muscle memory and improve eye-hand coordination. If used properly, about 15 minutes per day for two weeks, ball players of all ages and skill levels can achieve immediate, noticeable results."

What they're saying. While newly available to the public, well-known professional baseball players have trained with the I-ON for some time. Five-time all-star Todd Helton, regarded as one of the best hitters of his generation, is a spokesperson for the training device.

"After using the I-ON," says Helton, "I knew it was an excellent tool to teach the proper eye-hand coordination required to be a consistent hitter. It's for players who are serious about improving their hitting."

How to monitor improvement. To test short-term improvement, Moore says players must first assess their skills before using the I-ON. "The easiest way to do this is to get into the batting cage, take 25 pitches, and count the number of times you make a hit that would have put the ball in play," explains Moore. "Better play-



I-On the Ball: The I-ON Eye Trainer sells for US\$39.99 plus shipping and may be ordered through the website at: www.i-ontheball.com. It comes with an instruction manual and a tutorial DVD featuring major league baseball player Todd Helton.

ers should count the number of times they're able to control where they hit the ball. The best players should make a mental note of where they feel they are no longer seeing the ball, and then compare that to the time it takes to hear the ball hit the bat."

"For all skill levels, players should see a noticeable improvement in hitting skills," says Moore. ■

Source: www.i-ontheball.com