

Seven *Fundamentals* *of The Golf* *Swing*



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Introduction

Golf is often perceived as a very difficult game to play. In magazines there are many articles that deal with swing extension, swing plane, width, leg drive, shoulder and hip turn, and hundreds of complicated mechanics. There are so many theories, methods and swing philosophies that it can be quite confusing for a golfer. During my 40 years as a PGA Professional, I have heard instructors tell students that hitting a golf ball “isn’t rocket science,” yet they often teach as if it is. In contrast, I believe in keeping it simple. There is no single blueprint for the perfect golf swing. Everyone is different and capable of doing different things with their bodies, depending on personal health and fitness. I like the advice Harvey Penick provides in “My Little Red Book” when he says, do what comes naturally. You need a fundamentally sound grip and a few fundamentals, but then do what comes naturally and feels comfortable. This e-book boils down the golf swing to seven simple fundamentals designed to help you play better golf and enjoy the game of a lifetime.

I was introduced to the game at an early age and was named after the last amateur to win a major championship, Johnny Goodman, the 1933 U.S. Open Champion. My Dad was a golf professional and as a youngster I was able to observe the great swings of his generation, including Byron Nelson and Sam Snead. Golf has been my life passion, and I have been fortunate to observe those great players from the past to the present generations. I have studied the swing for many years, and although they may look quite different individually, they all have common fundamentals.

My competitive days included playing with Tom Watson in Kansas City Junior Golf to qualifying and playing in two PGA Tour events. I spent a year on the mini-tours, and although I didn’t meet my lofty goals, I loved the competition and challenges. My best finish in a PGA Section Championship is third and I have a low competitive round of 63.

I have been a PGA member since 1973 and I spent my apprenticeship at Onwentsia Club in Lake Forest, Illinois, where I began to learn my instruction skills from Hubby Habjan, the PGA National Golf Professional of the Year. My favorite place working was at the LaJolla Country Club in California, where I was fortunate to have as a member Gene Littler and Craig Stadler. It was a real joy to observe and play with those players. I then spent 14 years in Tucson working and

developing golf courses in Green Valley, Arizona, before my move to Battlement Mesa in 1992. I retired from the club after 22 years and moved to Farmington, Utah where I'm an instructor at the Oakridge Country Club.

I have developed a teaching philosophy that coaches you in developing the motor skills necessary to play the game competently. My favorite quote is from Albert Einstein, "If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough." Therefore I have developed golf instruction programs to improve skills in the seven fundamentals of the game one step at a time.

The fact remains that golf is a motor skill that is learned like all other motor skills. One step at a time until the skill is perfected and learned. If you visited the World Golf Hall of Fame, you would see pictures and videos of all the great players and their signature golf swings. Although each looks so different, they all have the fundamentals in common. In golf I have broken it down into seven fundamental skills that determine success or failure. These skills, when learned correctly in the proper order, make what appear to be complicated moves instinctive and automatic.

Fundamental Number 1 - Setup

Grip

The grip, or way the hands are placed on the club, is the most important part of the golf swing. Starting with a good grip will help the swing motion fall into place much more easily. The grip is your only connection with the golf club.

Placing your hands properly on the golf club helps you control the position of the clubface at impact and helps you create power and feel. One of the most common errors among golfers is a weak lead-hand grip that is too much in the palm. This produces a shot that slices (flies to the right for a right-handed player) and lacks power. Wrist action is a power source and gripping the club too much in the palm of your hand reduces wrist action. Placing the club more in the fingers in the lead hand rather than in the palm increases the amount of wrist hinge, which results in longer tee shots and more feel.

Even though there is a natural position in which the hands should hang, the correct golf grip does not seem to come naturally. When the club is first placed in the hands of a beginner, invariably they hold it in a position which will either fail

to consistently return the clubface to square, or will not provide the greatest clubhead speed.



Therefore, the grip must be learned starting with the lead-hand (top hand) grip.

The dots on the glove in the above picture show the position the club should take in the grip. The club should be held more in the fingers than in the palm.

Hold the club in front of your body and with the clubface square, place the club at an angle through the fingers, following the line of the dots pictured. The club should touch the base of the little finger and rest just above the first joint of the index finger (along the line of the dots).

With the club at an angle and in the fingers, place your left thumb (for right-handed players) toward the back side of the shaft.

You should also see a "V" that is created by the thumb and forefinger of the lead hand, and that "V" should be pointing back toward your right ear/shoulder area.

The hand you put higher on the golf club is called your "lead hand;" the bottom hand in the grip, the one that is placed lower on the club's handle, is called the "trailing hand." Despite those labels, the trailing hand is the dominant hand for most people.

It is important that the trailing hand is positioned in the golfer's grip to deliver a powerful blow at impact without overpowering the lead (or top) hand. The hands must be equal partners in the grip; therefore their placement is vital for consistent ball striking.



To place the trailing hand on the club correctly for the power grip, follow the procedure that is described and illustrated.

Identify the three sections of the ring, middle and index fingers (noted as sections 1, 2 and 3 in photo). Section 1 is the base of the finger (before the first knuckle), Section 3 is the tip of each finger (after the last knuckle) and Section 2 is in-between.

Holding the club with a perfect lead hand grip, set the last joint (between Sections 2 and 3) of the index finger of the trailing hand directly under the shaft. The hand should be set at a slightly downward angle. Place the club handle so it touches the dots (the dots are illustrated in the photo). This places the club handle between Sections 1 and 2 of the ring finger, directly on Section 2 of the middle finger, and between Sections 2 and 3 of the index finger

Cover your lead-hand (top-hand) thumb with the lifeline of your trailing palm.

Make sure that the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger of your trailing (bottom) hand points toward your ear/shoulder area. This "V" should be parallel to the "V" on your lead hand'



The hands must work together as a single unit when striking a ball with power. There are three common and fundamentally sound ways of gripping the golf club from which to choose, are pictured below.

The Vardon Overlap, sometimes called the Overlapping Grip, is the most common grip among players. Harry Vardon popularized this grip around the turn of the 20th Century.



To place your hands on the handle using the Vardon Overlap, take the little finger on the trailing hand and place it between the index and middle finger on the lead hand. The lead hand thumb should fit in the lifeline of the trailing hand.

The next most common grip is called the Interlock, or Interlocking grip. This grip is very popular on the LPGA Tour and has been used by many top male players, including Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods. This grip literally locks the hands together, but the golfer also runs the risk of having the handle stray into the palms of the hands. People with small hands, weak forearms and wrists, and beginners in many cases prefer this style of grip.



To use the Interlock grip, take the little finger on the trailing hand and intertwine it with the index finger on the lead hand. The lead-hand thumb should fit in the lifeline of the trailing hand.

The Ten Finger grip, commonly known as the Baseball Grip, does have its advantages. Hall of Fame member Beth Daniel, PGA Tour members Bob Estes and Dave Barr and Masters Champion, Art Wall Jr., have all used the Ten Finger grip. This grip is suggested to beginners as it simplifies early instruction. People who experience joint pain, have arthritis or small, weak hands often benefit by using the Ten Finger grip.



To position your hands properly using a Ten Finger grip, start with a perfect left-hand grip, then place the little finger of the trailing hand close against the index finger of the lead hand. Cover the lead hand thumb with the lifeline of the trailing hand.

These grip placements will facilitate the hands working together as one unit.

Grip pressure should be light enough to encourage clubhead speed, but firm enough to hold the club through impact.

Ultimately, the player should feel comfortable with the grip and confident it will return the clubface to square at impact.

Aim

A perfect swing made in the wrong direction will produce a most imperfect shot. Timing, rhythm, speed and square contact are of little value unless they produce a shot that travels toward the target.



When aiming the clubface, look at the lower 2-3 groove lines of the clubface, and ensure that those groove lines are at right angles to the ball-target line. Don't look at the top of the clubface, because the top of the clubface is often angled in such a manner that it is not parallel to the clubface's groove. If the clubface's groove lines are perpendicular to the ball-target line, then build the stance around the clubface so that one is standing along a stance line that is perfectly parallel to the ball-target line. It is very important to understand that stance and body alignment (knees, thighs, pelvis and shoulders) should be positioned parallel to the ball-target line, and that one should not look at the target to verify correct foot/body alignment when standing alongside the ball in the address position. In fact, if the head rotates sideways to look at the target after getting into a parallel-to-the-ball-target line foot/body stance position, the target should "appear" to be situated a little to the right, because we view the target from an eye-viewing position that is approximately 2-3 feet left of the ball-target line. A golfer should resist any inclination to change his stance/body alignment so that he "feels" that his body is directly facing the target, because this will cause him to aim too far to the right of the target. The correct reference point for aligning the stance/body when standing alongside the ball is the ball-target line and not the target.

Remember that the only thing that actually aims directly at the target is the clubface.

Stance & Ball Position

For an iron shot, the ball should be toward the center of the stance. This enables a downward swing arc at impact which will help with crisp, well-struck iron shots.

For a driver, the ball must be more forward toward the left foot. A good driver contacts the ball as the swing is moving on an upward arc, not only helping elevate the ball into the air, but also minimizing backspin.

Above all else, the shoulders must remain unaffected by ball position and must always remain pointing parallel to target. In many cases, as ball position moves forward for the driver, the shoulders start to open promoting an outside-to-inside swing and a slice. The shoulders must not open and close as ball position moves back and forward.



Ball on the ground

These are some keys in the set-up for a standard iron shot. They are done to help promote a downward strike of the ball that produces an arc that reaches its bottom in front of, below the ball and in the ground.

Distance from the ball: a general rule is that the length of the shaft determines how far we stand from the ball. With shorter clubs, we stand closer to the ball and with longer clubs we stand farther away.

Width of Stance: The stance is a stacked position of our shoulder, hips and knees over our feet. Just as with the distance from the ball, the width of our stance is determined by which club we are hitting. With short irons, our stance should be on the narrow side and with longer clubs we should be a little more on the wide side. A good rule of thumb is the stance should be shoulder width with the driver (the longest club in the bag) and get progressively narrower as we use shorter clubs to provide crisp, solid contact.

Weight Distribution: the weight should be evenly distributed 50/50 between right foot and left foot for a standard ball flight.

Shoulder Angle: the shoulders should be as level as possible at address. Now obviously, the right shoulder will be slightly lower than the left simply because the right hand is lower than the left on the golf club.

Ball Position: the ball position should be slightly ahead of the middle of the stance and a few inches inside the left heel.



Drive off the tee

These are the keys for a standard setup for a ball on a tee. They are done to promote a swing with a shallow angle of attack and an arc that reaches its bottom just before the ball, so we can strike the ball with a slight upward blow.

Distance from the ball: the driver is the longest club in the bag so it is the club we stand the farthest from the ball with. This is vital in swinging the club with a shallow angle.

Width of stance: again, the driver is the longest club so we need to stand with our widest stance, usually shoulder length.

Weight distribution: we want to favor the right leg with our weight distribution. About 60% of our weight should be on our right leg, with 40% on our left leg.

Shoulder angle: the right shoulder needs to be dropped down about an extra inch. This will tilt our upper spine slightly farther to the right than with our iron setup.

Ball position: the ball position should definitely be moved forward in the stance, almost in line with the instep of the left heel.

Posture

With a good grip and aim, the basic steps of the setup are in place. However, to encourage a really good swing, attention to posture is also important.

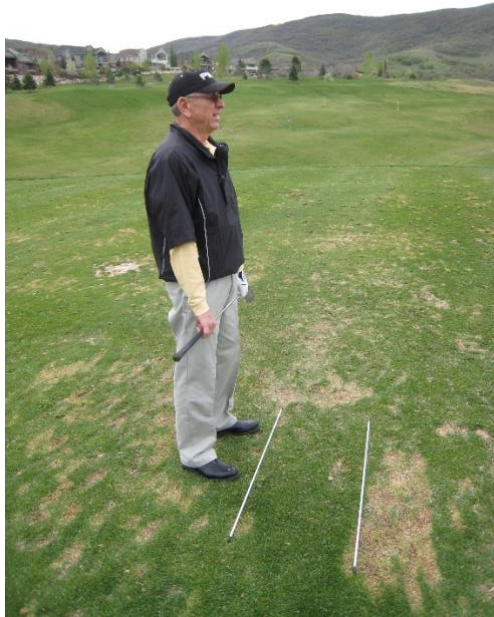
Posture, Balance & Muscular Readiness -- similar to other sports such as tennis or baseball in that the player is ready for action with their knees bent, weight balanced, and weight slightly favoring the balls of the feet in anticipation of movement. The only difference in golf is that we are not moving anywhere. We are creating motion in a fixed position.

The easiest method of learning how to adopt a perfect address position is to start from the ground up. Start with the body erect and the feet approximately a shoulder's width apart. Then, bend the knees slightly as if getting ready to sit down on a bar stool -- as demonstrated in the following photo.

As you bend the knees, you should simultaneously push the hips back so that it creates the appropriate bend at hip level. It is important to bend at the hips and not the waist. To accomplish that feat, you should have a distinct feeling that you are sticking out your rear-end. Note that if you bend at the hips, and not the

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waist, the lower back becomes straight and not rounded. If a golfer has difficulty getting the correct flex at the hips (rather than at the waist), then the following photo may be helpful.



Note that the golfer has placed a club shaft against the front of his upper thighs, and he then bends forward at the hips while pressing the club shaft firmly against the thighs. This will enable him to stick out his rear end and bend appropriately at the hips while keeping the lower back relatively straight.

It is important to realize that a golfer needs to adopt a straight lower-back posture without losing the slight roundness of the upper back. Trying to adopt a straight back all the way from the hips to the neck results in an overly rigid and unnatural back posture.

The head and chin must be held high enough up so the chin does not impede a full shoulder turn. If the chin is held down too much and the neck over flexed, the shoulders can't turn, the left arm bends, and the wrists do not automatically hinge the club onto the correct swing plane. To keep swing width for consistent hitting and a connected swing, the shoulders must turn freely, which helps keep the left arm straight. However we shouldn't overcompensate, and over-straighten the neck, and thereby lose the rounded appearance of the upper back in the address position.

Then the golfer should ensure that the hands hang vertically down from the shoulders in a relaxed manner when the clubface is placed behind the ball. The golfer should avoid any feeling that he is excessively stretching out (extending) the arms toward the ball, and the correct arm posture is demonstrated in the following photo.



Although these simple setup tips might seem too basic to have an influence on the overall swing, these simple tips are the bedrock of a good action. Master these fundamentals and see how the swing starts to evolve into a repeating powerful, trustworthy golf swing.

Fundamental Number 2 -- Square Clubface

We know that to hit the ball straight, we need to have a square clubface when we strike the ball and have a square clubface position throughout the entire swing. The more square the clubface is throughout the golf swing, the more the other fundamentals can work correctly, and the less adjustments and compensations we will have to make in our swing. If a golfer can learn to execute with a square clubface throughout the entire swing, then a great majority of swing faults will go

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away. This is because swing flaws are results, not causes! Most people think swing flaws are what cause our bad shots. Swing flaws are what save our bad shots from being really bad shots. A clubface that is in an excessively open or closed position throughout the golf swing is usually the real culprit. The fact is, if we are in such a bad position with the clubface, then we must make these flawed moves just to put some part of the club on the ball. The compensatory moves such as over-the-top, casting, scooping etc. are made during the swing in an attempt to save the shot.

Because the clubface affects so many other things in the swing, we will simply begin by explaining and showing what a square clubface is at each position.



A square clubface position at address is when the bottom two grooves or leading edge are exactly perpendicular to the target line.



A square clubface at the halfway back position is when the leading edge is exactly vertical, pointing to the sky.



A square clubface at the top of the backswing is when the leading edge is parallel to the golfer's left forearm, wrist and back of left hand.



A square clubface at the approach position is when the leading edge is exactly vertical, pointing straight up to the sky.



A square clubface at impact, which is necessary to hit a straight shot or make consistently crisp contact, is when the leading edge is perpendicular to the target line, just as at address



A square clubface at the halfway through position is when the leading edge is exactly vertical, pointing toward the sky.



The clubface position at the finish is a mirror of the clubface at the top of the swing. Just as the clubface was parallel to the golfer's left wrist, forearm and back of left hand at the top, at the finish it is parallel to a flat right wrist, back of hand and forearm. If the previous clubface positions are good, the finish should flow perfectly and naturally.

Fundamental Number 3 -- Impact Striking vs. Scooping

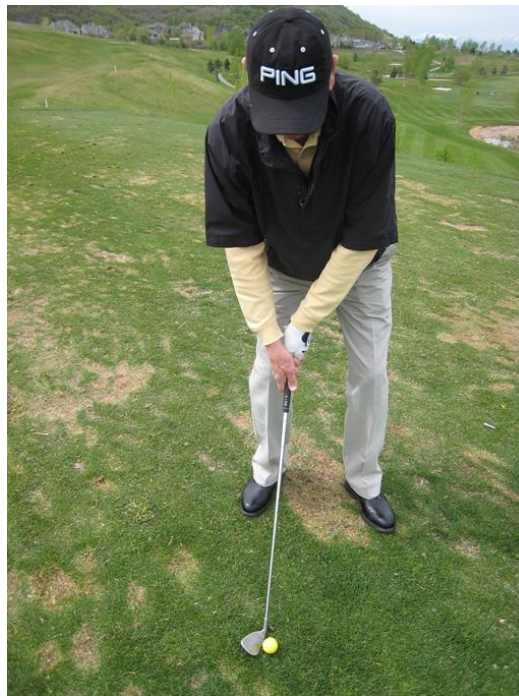
What is it that separates the really fine strikers of the golf ball from average and poor ball strikers? The one similarity all great ball strikers have is that they get into a great impact position. That is, they all know how to put the club on the ball. There is a certain feel and sound to a ball that is struck well, which cannot be produced from a poor impact position. Impact is the moment of truth and it is the most critical segment of the golf swing. Once a person learns to put the club on the ball correctly, the true spirit of golf is found and the real love of the game begins. From the first-time golfer to the seasoned professional, when a golfer feels that magical click of a correctly executed strike, there is a feeling of unexplainable satisfaction. We call this dead solid perfect.

My foremost goal as a golf coach is to help the student learn how to put the club solidly on the ball. That is, to learn a great impact position. The student needs to learn to feel the compression of the ball, and sometimes that means beginning

with little chip-type swings. Now, obviously, it would be nice if all students had a perfect backswing and a rock solid top of the backswing, but this means absolutely nothing if we cannot strike the ball properly. Once we learn how to strike the ball correctly, there are many things we can do to create more power and consistency in our swing. But, there is no point in working on those things if we cannot first make solid contact. Solid contact is what enables us to control the distance, trajectory and eventually the shape of each golf shot.

Now having said this, how do we get into a great impact position?

The way to begin is simply to show and describe some of the most common poor impact positions, which most golfers have been quite familiar with at one time or another. These positions can only produce an outcome of unsolid and weak shots. We will then show you a strong impact position and explain the movements that make it so solid, and why it is the secret to hitting crisp golf shots.



The scoop swing is perhaps the most common poor-impact position in the game. The result is usually fat or thin shots, especially when the ball is on the ground (not off a tee). When a golfer is in this position at impact, getting the entire clubface on the ball is virtually impossible. The shot will lack power, compression

and the correct trajectory. What causes a scoop shot? Some characteristics of the scoop impact are as follows:

- The handle of the club is behind the ball
- The weight is on the back foot
- The left wrist is broken down (cupped)
- The hips and shoulders are looking at the ball
- The arc of the club is bottoming out before the ball, resulting in fat or thin shots.

Another commonly seen poor impact position is the chicken wing. This is where a player's left arm folds in such a way that the left elbow is pointing toward the sky at and after impact. This position is caused by stopping the body's rotation while continuing the movement of the hands and arms past impact. This position also makes it very difficult to put the club on the ball with any power and consistency. Some characteristics of the chicken wing are as follows:

- The left elbow is bent and folding toward the sky
- The left wrist is collapsed (cupped)
- The strong body rotation has stopped
- There is too much weight on the back foot
- The arc of the club is bottoming out before the ball, resulting in fat or thin shots.

The third commonly seen poor impact position is a player who has an over-the-top move in their swing. This usually results in pulled and pull-sliced shots, which lack both directional control and power. Some characteristics of the over-the-top impact are:

- The hips, arms and shoulders are too open at impact as a result of incorrect sequencing early in the downswing
- The path of the club is traveling on a line that is excessively out-to-in
- There is too much weight still on the back foot
- The club is traveling on an angle of attack that is too steep for the particular club being hit.

The proper impact position



Stacked

From the face-on position, you can see that it is possible to draw a straight, vertical line through the left side of the golfer's body – from the center of the ankle, up through the inside of the knee, the center of the hip joint, the hands (the butt end of the golf club), the inside of the left elbow, up to the center of the shoulder.

This “stacked” position at impact (no, this isn't *stack and tilt*) is very powerful – it enables you to rotate efficiently and safely around your left hip joint while driving into the ground with your left leg for power.

“Stacking” this way means that the enormous forces surging through your body are directed straight down through your hip and knee joints – in the way that they are designed to load safely.

It also enables you to deliver the clubhead to the ball consistently, and with optimal impact conditions. Because the “firm” left side of your body isn't leaning away from the target, it is much easier to swing down and through the golf ball with a neutral clubhead path, and to square the clubface naturally with a free release of the golf club.

Some characteristics of the proper impact are as follows:

- Both arms are fully extended, the hands are forward of the ball
- The weight is on the front 80% to 85% flat-footed

- The left wrist is flat
- The shoulders are square to slightly open to your target line
- The hips are left of the ball
- The arc of the club is bottoming ahead of the ball

Fundamental Number 4 -- Swing Plane (not straight back and straight through)

The swing plane affects the direction the golf ball travels when hit, and the trajectory of the shot. The plane is an imaginary flat surface used to describe the path and angle on which the club swings. The golf swing consists of the backswing plane and the downswing plane, and can be on plane, upright (above the plane) or flat (below the plane).

The golf swing follows a circular pattern, or arc. The swing plane is literally the tilt of the inclined plane made by the club's shaft as it travels along this arc. That tilt can be upright like a Ferris wheel, flat like a baseball swing or somewhere in between. The plane can also tilt left or right of the target line or directly along the target line. An imaginary line from the ball to the golfer's shoulder establishes the backswing plane.

The club is on plane when an extension of the butt end of the shaft intersects the target line. If the butt of the club points outside the target line (flat), the club head will travel in to out; if the butt points inside the target line (upright), the head will travel out to in. An in-to-out path can create a pushed or hooked shot, while an out-to-in path can create a pulled or sliced shot.

Each golfer has his own swing plane, determined by his body type and the club he is using. The length of the golfer's arms, legs and torso affect his posture; the length of the club affects the angle of the shaft at address. A 5-foot-2 golfer holds a 40-inch-long club at more of an angle (flatter) than a 6-foot-2 golfer; therefore, a shorter golfer will tend to have a flatter on-plane swing than a taller golfer. If that same 5-foot-2 golfer swings the club below that plane, his swing is flat in relation to the plane.



Some Tools on the V1 Coaching to help in Swing Plane

On the downswing, if the club travels below the backswing plane (flat), the butt of the club points outside the target line and the clubhead will travel in-to-out. If the club travels above the backswing plane (upright), the butt points inside the target line and the head will travel out-to-in. An in-to-out path can create a pushed or hooked shot, while an out-to-in path can create a pulled or sliced shot. If the club is on plane in the downswing, the club will travel straight down the target line. The result will be a straight shot -- if the clubface is square, or facing the target at impact.

The greatest players have had swing planes that range from very flat, such as Ben Hogan, Gary Player and Lee Trevino. Famous players with upright swing planes include Jack Nicklaus, Tom Weiskopf and Tom Watson. The flatter swing has a better chance of staying connected, making it easier to time the swing. It also causes the ball to come off the clubface on a lower trajectory with a tendency to draw if the clubface is square to the target. The more upright swing wanders less from the target line and allows a better chance for a straight shot, if timed correctly.

I have always favored a more upright swing plane as I feel it is easier to contact the ball consistently. As described in the pictures in the square clubface fundamental, the club goes around, then up, back down around, and then up to the finish – with the clubface remaining square in all the sequences. Again, there is no best way as seen by all the different backswing planes from all the great golfers. Golfers need to identify what works best for each individual to attain solid impact.

Fundamental Number 5 -- Lower Body Stability Is Key to Golf Swing

Unfortunately, much of today's golf instruction is not aimed at the masses, but focuses on a select few.

When articles and tips discuss rotation of the core, driving the legs, turning of this and turning of that, there are few (low-handicap amateurs and professionals) that will benefit from such advice.

The average golfer who concentrates on what the body is doing and fails to hit the ball solidly and straight is concentrating on the wrong elements of the body.

Keep in mind it's called a golf "swing," not a golf turn or torque. The average player needs to make sure they put the most work and emphasis on the swinging muscles of the swing, not the turning big muscles.

To explain further, if you're having trouble hitting the ball in the sweet spot, hitting the ball straight or lack power, chances are you are overusing your big, slow-turning muscles, such as your shoulders and hips, and not using the swinging speed muscles of the arms, wrists and hands enough.

The fastest muscles you use to hit a golf ball are in your hands, the only part of the body connected with the club is your hands, and the part of the body most instrumental in squaring the clubface is the hands.

When was the last time you checked to see how your swinging muscles were doing?

Take this test: Take an 8 iron, put your feet totally together and start hitting balls. Do you hit the ball solidly? Do you hit it straight? Can you keep your balance?

What this drill lets us know is if, in fact, the most important parts of your swing are working correctly.

By putting your feet together, you take the body out of the swing and isolate the motion of the hands, wrists, forearms and upper arms. These are the muscles that you must be able to use correctly before adding the body to the swing.

For many golfers, the thought of the arms swinging the body is much more effective than the body swinging the arms. Do you need the body involved in your golf swing? Of course, but it acts as a supporting role and stabilizer to the swinging of your arms. Whether you're driving, chipping or putting the golf ball, every shot on the course depends on a very important yet often overlooked element: **the stability of your lower body**. Maintaining the proper knee flex on your back leg helps avoid many fundamental errors, such as swaying, "coming up out of the swing," over swinging and the dreaded "reverse pivot." Stability during the swing is vital for consistently good ball striking



So, the next time you go to the practice range, remember it's called a SWING, not a turn, pivot or coil, and give yourself the test above and get better at it.

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Fundamental Number 6 -- Rhythm (We try to hit it too hard)

All great players have the ability to swing every club at a consistent tempo and with great balance. Rhythm and balance are linked. Professional players such as Tom Watson exhibit faster tempos. Some, like Ernie Els, exhibit a slower tempo. Yet all remain balanced.

The key to consistency is to maintain your balance and use a smooth rhythm.

If you rush your swing, you will lose your balance and the end result is inconsistent contact and poor ball flight. Outstanding ball strikers are rarely off balance at impact and their rhythm is the "glue" that bonds their positions and movements. Great, consistent swings seem effortless. The legendary Julius Boros often said, "swing easy and hit hard." Great rhythm allows you to properly sequence your body motion and arrive at impact in a position of leverage and power.

Ten-time PGA Tour driving accuracy champion Calvin Peete says the three keys to straight driving are "balance, balance and balance." If you want to be a more consistent ball striker, you must understand how the body should be balanced.

The best way to find your rhythm is to hit your driver at various power levels and distances. Start out trying to hit your driver only 100 yards then increase the speed of the swing until you find your optimal swing for distance and accuracy. I have found that about 75% power often produces the best results.

Fundamental Number 7 – Width & Length of Swing

No one questions the wider the swing radius and the longer the length of your swing, the farther you hit the ball. You do not have to be super flexible to expand your swing width and length. You just have to do it the right way. Some think to gain width you have to swing the club as far back and away as possible. But in doing so, they lose connection between their arms and body, which creates a lot of problems in the forward swing.

Swing width is defined as the radius of the top of the club handle from your sternum, or how far the club handle is from the center of your chest throughout

your swing. The wider the swing, the greater the distance the club moves, which translates into more clubhead speed. Clubhead speed, of course, determines the degree of power you impart to the ball.

As noted previously, you don't try to gain swing width by stretching your arms out as far as possible in the backswing. To do so will separate your arms from your body so they are unable to work together as a coordinated unit. Also, the tendency is to over shift to the right, slide your right side too much laterally and sway. Tempo and rhythm are seriously challenged in all of the above. It takes more compensatory movements to bring everything together at impact, and that is rarely achieved.

You can achieve your maximum effective swing width in a few ways.

- The left arm should straighten out almost completely in the backswing. The arm doesn't get stiff, and the elbow doesn't lock.
- The longer you prolong the hinging of your wrists in the backswing, the farther the clubhead gets from your body and hence a wider swing.
- It may sound heretical to say you should move your head in the swing, but in fact everyone's head moves to some extent during the swing. Let that happen to assist widening your swing, but be sure the movement is lateral. You don't want your head to move up and down for a lot of reasons, one of which is that it does nothing to help widen your swing arc.
- To achieve maximum width on your backswing, it is important to transfer weight to your right side.

The width of your swing is not only a backswing concept. There is a forward swing component that is related to the backswing. It has to do with how you use your elbows. The distance between your elbows at address should be maintained throughout the entire swing. If on the backswing your right elbow flies outward or behind you — chicken wings — that creates a separation that alters the path of the club. If the left elbow chicken wings at impact or just beyond, you have given up most of the power the swing should generate. Flight control is also lost.

Getting length in your swing is important. A full swing is the shaft of the club reaching a point where it is parallel with the ground. Golfers should not strive to get the club to a parallel position at the completion of their backswing unless they have the strength, flexibility and technique to control the club so solid contact is

made with the ball and accurate shots are played. If that is the case, more clubhead speed is generated and you will hit the ball farther and straighter than if you don't get to parallel. You can get the club to parallel in ways that are not going to bring you added distance and will diminish flight control. One is by bending your left arm to complete your backswing. That may get the club to parallel, or past it, but not in an effective way. Keep in mind that the club does not have to get to parallel to achieve maximum length. **I am a strong believer in a three-quarter backswing with the proper width. From this position, maximum power can be consistently created.**



There must always be synchronization in the swinging of your arms and body. Essentially, the arms stay in front of your body throughout the swing. It is important that your elbows retain their distance apart and are always pointing down. If you have good flexibility, you can create maximum effective swing length with a significant full rotation of the shoulders. Ideally, the left shoulder moving to the place where the right shoulder was at address will constitute a full rotation of the shoulders. Older golfers who have lost flexibility can achieve the same results with more turn or rotation of the hips. The hips are not as dependent on your flexibility.

You can complete the backswing and get maximum length by hinging your wrists completely. You must be careful, however, that you do not hinge beyond your normal range of motion. If you do, chances are very good that the club will come loose from your left hand. This will require a kind of regripping and can invariably cause mishits and misdirected shots and/or an open clubface at impact.

Summary

These seven fundamentals when learned can produce wonderful solidly hit golf shots. The question remains how does one begin, and that is where the keen eye of a golf coach with the proper equipment can have a huge impact in the learning of the game. Find a PGA Professional who knows the game, and then a lesson program can benefit you. A good professional can accomplish more in 15 minutes than you can on your own over several weeks.

Also, look for someone who will use a video swing analysis, and give you a video clip lesson summary at the end. That way, you can play the lesson clip before your practice, or even load it to your smart phone and review it at the range. Seeing how your swing shapes up on split-screen - before and after - can help you get things grooved.



At the Oakridge Country Club I have several programs for coaching you to become a better golfer. I use the V1 Coaching System for video analysis so you always have a copy of your golf lesson. As part of a teaching program emphasis is placed on the scoring game (100 yards and in, putting, chipping, pitching and bunker play), which is 75% of strokes taken on the golf course.

For those of you who cannot make it to the club there is also an online coaching program. For more information visit our web site www.johnnygoodmangolf.com

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