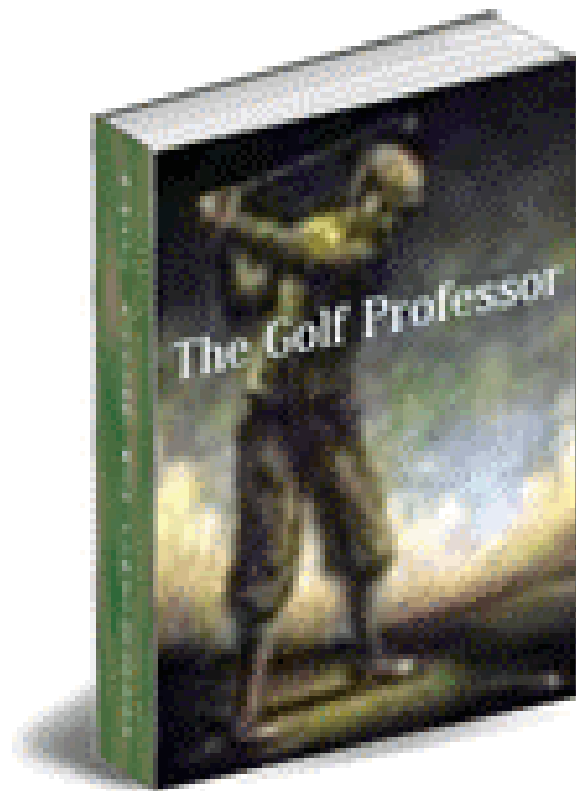


The Golf Professor



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Introduction

If like me you have bought and read many golf books on how to reduce your score, or handicap, and yet you still remain a high handicapper, then read on!

We know that the average handicap for the millions of golfers worldwide is just over 18. Why?

We are all capable of playing much better, especially with the right golf equipment available now days. The modern clubs have gone along way in helping us become better players or should have done!

I believe that in part it is to do with the kind of tuition that we are given. Another part is to do with the mental approach to the game, and the final part is to do with observing how the good golfers play.

The mental approach is a whole area, which requires its own special techniques, and I will not cover those in this book, however I will cover the other two areas, of tuition and observation of the golf game.

Lets start with observation. Most of you will have seen Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Jim Furyk, on TV, if not in the flesh.

Palmer's wrists at the top of the back swing are in a position that very few teachers would recommend, and at one time he virtually fell over after every drive.

Nicklaus's right elbow, at the top of his swing, is well away from the 'orthodox ' position.

Furyk's swing is a looping motion, not usually recommended for consistency.

Each golfer is different. How is it then, that these fine golfers – and many more like them, who have some major swing flaw, play such great golf!!

The answer is simple.

Whatever they do on the way up from, and down to the ball, they are always in the right position on impact!

At the moment the club face contacts the ball, **3 things are correct.**

- 1. The face of the club is square to the target.**
- 2. The club is swinging on the correct plane.**
- 3. The club is swinging in the right direction.**

Each of these fine golfers has learned not' How to swing a golf club', but how to make the golf swing

fulfil those **3 vital objectives**.

If you, and many of your fellow golfers, could only force yourselves to play the game in the same way, then you would be much better players without doubt..

We are always after secrets of being a better golfer.

This is the real secret of golf

The second secret to golf is to remember that the main object in golf is to get the ball into the hole in as few a number of shots as possible, not how far you can hit the thing!

The criterion of a golf swing is not about how nice it looks, but how effective it is in getting the ball from A to B, to help you achieve the main objective.

And this is dependent entirely on how well or poorly you can meet the game's basic mechanical requirements.

Correct plane, correct direction and club face square when you hit the ball.

Unfortunately, few golfers either appreciate or accept the fact that there are no absolute rights about the golf swing.!

There are many so called golf 'gurus' that give so much attention and misleading tuition and advice to swing techniques, that they miss the obvious.

Everyone is seeking 'the secret', that golf gurus' put effect before cause in their golfing tuition, and this is passed on to their golf clients. Even more sadly, most of the golfers go on doing so for the rest of their playing days.

But you have made the **first critical move** to change, by buying 'The Golf Professor'.

The average handicap of 20 million golfers worldwide is probably around 18. Considering the physical and mental abilities of most people concerned that is very poor indeed.

Golf is a difficult game, but I think that any moderately fit person should be capable of knocking the golf ball around a golf course in 80 shots or better, especially with the modern golf equipment.

What the average golfers really need are lessons on 'Why' before the 'How'. A mental picture of what is required before trying to accomplish this physically, is a far better approach to this great game.

So if you are really serious about improving your golf game, then try never to lose sight of what you are trying to do, which is:-

- 1. Your club must be square to the target at impact, (and this is controlled by your grip and aim).**
- 2. Your club must be travelling in the right direction, (mainly controlled by your shoulders at address).**
- 3. Your angle of approach, or swing plane is correct, (controlled by body posture at address).**

I will go on to show how to do all of those things.

Right enough of the talk, lets get down to business.

The Basics

When you swing a club, what basically are you trying to do?
What is the basic objective of all the movements you make?

I have no doubt that nearly every golfer could supply me with a different answer!

However I believe it is simply this:- You make all the movements when you have a golf club in your hands, to get the clubhead to meet the ball correctly.

Of course you will use a variety of devices to help you achieve this, for instance, pivot, weight transfer, head reasonably still, wrist-cocking, but these are not objectives in themselves.

Lets debate a few myths before we start

Myth 1

Keep Your Head Still.

It is important for your head to stay at a consistent level, but not necessarily in a fixed position, throughout the golf swing. When someone is told to 'keep their head still,' one of the things that can happen is restriction of the shoulder turn on the backswing.

Another problem arises on the follow through. When your head is in a fixed position, the hip turn is also restricted, commonly resulting in a topped shot.

Allow your head to slightly swivel toward the right on your takeaway, and on the downswing, keep your eye on the ball but allow your head to swivel back to the left a bit. Be natural.

Myth 2

Practice Makes Perfect

Practice does not make perfect, unless you know what you are doing. Most of us practice our mistakes rather than trying to find a way to fix our mistakes.

Hitting hundreds of golf balls will not necessarily make you a better player.

Hitting a few quality golf shots, and observing what the golf does, and then act upon it, will improve your shot making through feedback.

Knowing what to change will help.

Myth 3

Better equipment will improve your game.

It is true that certain equipment will help but not necessarily. If buying the best equipment one could afford made us better golfers, then all the millionaires in the world would be experts! It is what you do with the golf club that makes all the difference.

Proper impact of the club on the golf ball is the thing that achieves good golf shots.

Lets discover what is the proper impact, and how you can achieve this.

1. Club face is square- at right angles- to your target line.
2. The direction, or line coincides with your target line.
3. The angle of the club's approach allows the club face to hit solidly into the back of the ball.

If you always meet those 3 objectives then

You will always hit the ball straight and solid, whatever swing you have.

If you get 1 or more wrong no matter what type of elegant swing you have, your shots will be miss-hit or go in the wrong direction.

Now to the crunch part:-

How do we achieve those 3 objectives?

Lets understand the fundamentals

The Grip

Which way the clubface will be pointing at impact is controlled primarily by your grip,
The way you hold the club.

You need a grip that will not simply swing the clubface through the ball squarely but will also do it with speed.

What is the ideal grip?

Only you can answer that question, by careful examination of the way you hold the club to get the job done.

There are three basic types that are used.

The interlocking grip

This is where the two hands are joined together around the grip of the shaft by the interlocking of the little fingers.

The likes of Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus use this grip.

The baseball or full finger grip

This is where both hands grip the shaft without locking together, in a baseball grip fashion.

The Overlapping Grip

This is where the hands are joined together by hooking the small finger of the right hand over the knuckle of the left forefinger.

And this is by far the most popular, but is also the best solution found by studying many top golfers.

Both interlocking and the overlapping grips are the most popular grip methods being used today. Both grips are formed by connecting the little finger of the top hand with the fore finger of the bottom hand.

A good grip allows the hands to function as one unit during the swing. There is no qualitative difference between the interlocking and the overlapping grip methods.

The best choice is often based on the size of your hands. The right grip looks good and feels comfortable.

Most women and men with small hands usually play their best golf by using the interlocking grip.

Those golfers who have average to large-sized hands often perform better with the overlapping.

Here's a simple way to determine which grip is for you.

Stand in front of a mirror and compare both grip methods. A grip that works not only feels good, but looks well proportioned to the eye.

A golfer's hands that are too small to use an overlapping grip, will end up squeezing the life out of the club trying to hang on.

A golfer's hands that are too big to use the interlocking grip, will feel that the grip is too small and cause the club to slip in the hands.

The grip is the most important part of the golf swing. The grip controls the clubface. You need a square clubface to hit the ball straight and far.

Choosing a grip that fits the size of your hands makes everything possible. A good grip equals good golf.

Personal preference will determine what grip to use.

How do you go about it?

Start by placing the club grip diagonally across your open left hand, so that it lies in the crook of the first finger and across the palm under the butt of the thumb, with about half an inch of the grip protruding. Then close your left hand over the shaft, with the thumb riding just to the right side of the grip.

For a right-handed player, the left hand is essential. You don't want to put the club too high in the palm of your hand. You want to position it diagonally across the palm.

If you are correct so far, you will find your last three fingers are pressing the club firmly against your palm. The 'V' formed by the thumb and forefinger is pointing

between your chin and the right shoulder, when you ground the club with the face square to the target.

And when you look down you will see between two and three knuckles of your left hand.

Now add your right hand to your left, by bringing it onto the grip as close, as is comfortably possible below the left hand.

This is done in such away that if you opened both hands, your palms would be directly opposed.

If you have done this correctly, you will find that the shaft nestles neatly across the roots of your fingers of your right hand, and that you are gripping the club chiefly with the second and third fingers.

You should have a fairly neutral right hand grip -- don't hold too tightly. If you create a gap in between the first and second fingers, you will create a "trigger". This allows you to hold the angle and get more power.

Check next that the right thumb is slightly to the left side of the shaft, and that the left thumb rests snugly in the palm of your right hand.

Also that your right forefinger is slightly triggered around the grip.

Remember that your club must be square to the target at impact and this is controlled by your grip and aim.

Do not grip the club too tightly as this tenses the muscles and restricts the freedom of swing.

Remember the flight of the ball will always tell you whether your grip is returning the clubface square to the target.

Grip Tips

Grip Thickness

You should make sure that your grips fit your hand properly. To check your grip, place your hand around the club. You don't want your middle fingers running into and overlapping the palm. You do want a small gap between the pinkie and pad on the hand.

Check Your Vs!

Many things can cause a slice, but most often the grip is the source of the trouble. Here's how to fix it: Make sure that when looking down at address, you can see the first two knuckles of your left hand and a "V" formed between the thumb and

forefinger pointing toward your right shoulder. With the right hand, have the "V" pointing toward your chin or slightly to the right shoulder. It works!

Grip it Light on the Right

In general, you need to keep the right side solid for a strong shot. But don't let this carry through to your grip. Many golfers tend to grip the club too tightly with the right hand, which leads to unnecessary tension. It can also make you swing "over the top" and cut across the ball. Here's the fix: Check your right-side grip, arm, and shoulder tension before each swing. Light muscles are better than tight muscles!

Don't Choke it to Death!

Many golfers think they have to grip it hard to hit it hard. Actually, a tense muscle is a slow muscle! Clubhead speed is crucial for distance, and light muscles can work faster. Grip it light to hit it far!

Point Your Way to Consistency

What the hands do directly affects the clubface position, which affects the ball's flight. With a normal stance, take your grip but point your finger down the shaft so it's pointing at the ball at address. Check the club when it's parallel to the ground on both the backswing and follow-through. The finger should point down the target line on the way back and at the target on the way through. This is also a great tip if you're confused about how it should feel to release your hands properly.

Checking the Grip with the Clubhead

If your hands are improperly aligned with the clubhead, you will hit only a few accurate shots. Very often, while the golfer is fiddling with the grip, this inadvertently rotates the shaft and twists the clubface out of alignment. Most pros, on the other hand, know that the grip is correct only when it is correctly aligned with the clubface, take pains to check this fundamental of good golf.

If your shots bend in the air, the grip is not correct.

As the grip takes care of the clubface, so the way that you aim and stand to the ball at address will largely determine the direction of your swing.

This is the second vital golfing objective

Posture and Alignment

If the ball is to be started straight, the swing line and the target line must coincide at impact. In other words the clubhead must be straight along the target line when you strike the ball.

By far the easiest way of ensuring that this will happen is to align yourself perfectly parallel to the target line when you address the ball.

If you do not the direction of your swing at impact will naturally follow your alignment at address.

It will cross the ball from out to in if you aim left of target, and from in to out if you aim right of target.

Alignment

This section is important.

It is because golfers do not appreciate the importance of correct aim and alignment that a lot of golfers never score as well as they can swing.

You will not be one of them now.

Notice how all the top golfers always stand behind the ball first to identify their target then stand parallel to this line when they address the ball.

The most common error of all in getting to play a shot is just plonking the feet down then placing the club behind the ball.

Correct alignment can only be a sheer fluke!

Another common error is that even good golfers assume that if their feet are parallel to the target the rest of their body is as well. This may not be the case.

When you're setting up to make your shot, make sure you're focusing on your target, not a distraction, such as a water hazard or sand bunker. If you're thinking about a hazard, your body is naturally going to focus on that point. Acknowledge the hazard, but focus on your target.

There is a **positive procedure** for setting up to hit a golf ball, which I want you to study, practise and build firmly into your own game.

1. Take the club in your hands as you approach the ball from behind. Look down the target line, and form a mental picture of the shot.

When you look at the target and away from the ball, you lose all your orientation. So use an intermediate target.

Something between the ball and your target. Make sure you can see it when you're looking at the ball. It'll usually be a discoloured blade of grass, a twig, anything that stands out.

Pick your intermediate target, stand behind the ball and look through it at your target. Pick something you'll be able to see when you're looking at the ball. It should be about six to twelve inches away from the ball.

2. Take the grip, the one that I told you to do earlier, and move round to the side of the ball.

Keeping your eyes on your intermediate target, move to the ball.

3. With your grip formed place the clubface behind the ball so that the bottom edge of the club is exactly at right angles to your target line, and your intermediate target. Always do this with every club in the bag. **Do this before you take a stance.**
4. Now move into position, so that you, yourself are parallel to the target line.
5. Finally check, and re-check that whatever alignment your feet take that your shoulders and upper body are parallel to the target line.

A very good gimmick for setting up is to imagine that the ball is on one railway line, and that you are standing on the other. The far rail is your target line. You are correctly setup for your swing line to coincide with your with your target line, especially when every part of you aligns exactly with the rail on which you are standing.

If you follow this advice then the ball position relative to your feet will take care of itself.

If the clubface is square and you are square to the clubface then the ball will automatically be in the correct position

We have seen that the alignment of the clubface is controlled by the grip and the direction of the swing by how a golfer aims.

Stance

Standing the correct distance from the ball at address every time is vital, if you are to make a sound swing.

If you don't your brain will tell your body to compensate for your misalignment and that is bad for your swing.

Your stance is very important to your swing because it influences your stability and balance. It also determines your mobility or just how well you will be able to move when swinging.

Your stance shouldn't be too wide or too narrow. Your stance should allow your weight to shift from your back hip to your front hip as you swing your club and follow through.

An easy way to determine if your stance is correct is to see how your knees are aligned after following through. If your knees are together, then your stance is correct. But if your knees do not reach each other or overlap each other, then your stance is either too wide or too narrow.

When you swing your club, your finishing position should look like this: your weight should be balanced on your front hip, your back toe should be on the ground, your hands should be up above your front shoulder and your chest and back knee should be facing the hole or where you need the ball to go.

If any of these things are not happening to you, then you need to correct your position and practice swinging and ending up in the proper finishing position.

By working on your stance and finishing position, your golf swing is on its way to giving you a perfect game.

A slightly wider stance eliminates any need to rotate excessively through impact. Reducing the lower body rotation allows you to generate more power by swinging the arms.

The last piece in the jigsaw is the angle of the clubs approach to the ball., and this is due to correct Posture.

Posture

If there is one fundamental most neglected by recreational and pro golfers, it would have to be posture.

The thing that controls the angle of clubhead approach is the plane of your swing, and this in turn is largely dependent on your posture and stance at address.

If you bend over the ball with your legs straight and your head and hands low, the only way to swing the club is in a steep or upright plane. This in its self will generate a steep downward approach to the back of the ball. Giving the ball a downward blow instead of a forward hit.

On the other hand if you stand very erect from your hips, with your knees bent excessively, and with your head and hands high, your natural swing plane will be too shallow or flat.

This will produce a path which will mean that you will hit the ground before the ball.

Try to find a happy medium between both the previous angles, and the way to do this is to relate your posture to your build and height.

If you are tall, you will need to stand tall, with your knees well flexed and your head and hands high, so that the club does not come down too steep..

Conversely, if you are short, you will need to lean over from the waist with your legs straighter, so the club does not come in too shallow.

Not only will good posture improve your ability to strike the ball more consistently, it will also improve power, stability and eliminate chronic golfing injuries.

Nothing good can come from poor posture. Good posture protects the back and puts the body in the right position to make a good swing.

I've seen a lot of people with poor golf posture, primarily because they don't know any better. That keeps them from being able to work on more sophisticated issues. Remember your posture when you're setting up; in particular, keep your back straight and bend from the hips.

Hands and Arms

Your hands and arms should hang directly below the shoulders. To check the location of your hands and arms, set up to the ball as described above. Then let your left arm hang loose. See where the hand is, that's where you should be holding the club.

Posture isn't negotiable. It's a requirement to being able to make a good swing. Without it, you'll always be coming back to that and never be able to move on and progress.

It's basic from a physical stand point, protecting your back, and from a motion stand point, being able to make a good swing.

Distance From Ball

Get into a good, athletic set-up, flex your knees, weight on the balls of your feet and spine angle pretty straight. This will allow you to get the perfect distance from the ball every time.

Use the following drill to help: Set up normally, then let your lower hand drop off the shaft. It should fall right across from where you took it off.

If you're too far from the ball and you drop your lower hand, it will fall way inside by the butt of the club.

Conversely, if you're too close to the ball, when you drop your hand, it will end up low on the shaft.

We have managed to sort out all of the 3 objectives just by ensuring your setup is correct.

If you can get your grip, your aim, and your stance right, then you are well on the way to becoming a good golfer.

Of course if you get them wrong, then making a good swing is virtually impossible.

Give yourself a chance of hitting good golf shots all the time by taking care when setting up to play a shot.

Ball Position

Very little is usually said about ball position, but this aspect is very influential in the ball's action and flight.

Most recreational golfers setup with a different ball position on every shot. I like to use a constant ball position for every shot and here's why...

Too many recreational golfers play their short irons way back and woods too far forward in their stance.

The further you move the ball back in your stance, the more you close your shoulders and take the club inside while going back.

The further you play the ball forward in your stance, the more open your shoulders are at address. You will lose some of your ability to turn when going back and you will open up that much sooner coming through.

One of the common errors in ball position, is the tendency to play the ball too far back in the stance with the longer clubs.

Position the ball off a point between the centre of your chest and your left shoulder.

Keep it simple. Use the same ball position for every shot. The ball should be played off the inside of your forward foot and line up with the logo on your shirt or left breast. The only thing that changes is your stance (back foot) widens for drives and longer shots and narrows for shorter shots.

Constant Ball Position will help you setup to the ball in the same way every time. Try it out and I think you'll find it will help you hit more consistent golf shots.

Take care in the setup and all this will reduce the need to experiment, or compensate.

Note

Grip, posture, and ball position, are three things you can quickly check because you work on them while you're standing still. They should be the first things you cross off your list. The other aspects of the golf swing take much more time and concentration because you'll be working on them while you're swinging the club.

Check your grip, your posture, and your ball position and move on.

The Swing

Now for the real fun.

The swing has two parts to it, the backswing and the downswing.

However, I would like to emphasise now that the swing both back and forward should be carried out in an easy natural flow, without a conscious effort.

As you know from the earlier part of this book that I like to keep things as simple as possible, however,

The swing is not a bunch of parts. It is a full swing back and a full swing through. As with all great golfers the head stays reasonably still,(may move laterally). The swing is smooth. The swing is grooved through practice. The swing is powerful with no display of effort.

I appreciate that some of you will want to know the breakdown of the swing to achieve the 3 objectives, which is always your main aim.

Backswing

There are basically two objectives of the backswing.

1.The first is to create momentum, which in turn provides the power that is transmitted into the ball on the through swing.

2.The second is to get the golf club in the correct position from which it can swing into the back of the ball square to the target.

(remember the objectives at the beginning of this book!)

The largest amount of power is created, by turning the top half of your body, against the resistance of the bottom half of your body.

Keep it simple.

Keep your head relatively still (contrary to popular belief, it will move slightly backwards), and pivot your shoulders.

This action will make your arms turn and swing the club back from the ball.

As the weight of the club begins to exert leverage on your wrists, when it passes hip height, your wrists will naturally cock.

Your body turn will depend on how athletic you are, as well as your body shape.

Allow this to happen naturally. As you improve at golf then you may wish to exercise this part, but also the more you play, the more this will improve naturally.

How far you can hit the ball, will largely depend upon how tight you can coil your top half to the bottom half of your body, and your natural clubhead speed which is generated by your hand speed.

This is all there is to the power aspect of the golf shot.

Do not try to force this beyond your natural limits. Be content and play within yourself (we cannot all be Tiger Woods or John Daly).

(remember that the main object in golf is to get the ball into the hole in as few a number of shots as possible, not how far you can hit the thing!)

Over swinging and forcing the issue will lead to body sway, and head movement, which in turn will cause the club to be out of alignment or not square when it arrives at the ball. (remember our objectives).

The second objective is to get the golf club into the correct position from which you can swing it squarely into the back of the ball, along the target line.

(A point to note that a square hit from a slow moving clubhead often travels further than a glancing blow from a jet propelled club).

Start with a smooth turn of your right shoulder away from the ball, allow your arms to follow the natural path dictated by your turning shoulders, rather than forcing them along a different path. Only the really good players can get the club to follow a different path.

As the shoulders turn, resist their pull in your legs, and hips. Keep your head relatively still (It will move slightly backwards).

Keep your left arm reasonably straight, (the elbow will bend slightly). Allow your right elbow to bend as it wishes.

You will observe that the club will naturally travel back and move inside your target line. This is perfectly ok.

Again try to allow all this movement to be natural. Do not force the club outside or drag it inside this natural line.

As your shoulder turn nears completion, the weight of the club, as it rises, will be encouraging your wrists to hinge. Let them do so as the club goes up over your shoulder.

With a proper shoulder turn and movement, this will put your golf club in the correct position for the angle of approach for the down swing.

Your left shoulder should be turned under your chin. This is easier if you keep your chin up throughout the swing. Again do not force this movement.

Try to keep your right knee flexed as it was at the address, and your weight will have moved to your right heel..

If all is well your clubface should be square at the top, or parallel to your left arm. The better players may wish to keep the left heel on the ground which restricts slightly the hip turn, but will generate more torque.

The longer and wider you can make your backswing the more time you give yourself to accumulate speed and power on the downswing.

Whatever else you do, take a smooth swing at a waltz tempo and finish in balance. If you can do that, then most of the time you will have hit a decent, if not good, shot. And the reverse is true. If you fail to finish in balance and are unable to pose, you will have almost certainly hit a bad shot.

Swing by turning your shoulders and let the arms and hands follow.

The backswing is nothing more than rotating the left shoulder forward and so that it moves under your chin and the downswing is nothing more than keeping the chin in place (behind the ball) while rotating the right shoulder back under the chin, and then hold the finish. This rotation is around the spine -- you should not be dropping the shoulders. They move in almost a flat rotation.

The weight shift will take place naturally if you do these two things, maintain a light grip throughout the swing and pose in a balanced position at the finish. As Sam Snead said, "start down in a slow tempo, like a waltz, not the twist!"

The following checkpoints should help. Halfway back the shaft should be pointing down the target line and the face should be slightly closed. You do not want to go inside on the backswing or roll your wrists so that the face of the club point to the sky.

At the top of the backswing the right forearm and wrist should be as though you are supporting a tray of food (elbow out and forearm straight up).

But these are just checkpoints that you work on during practice swings. When you swing on the course, just think about tempo, having a light grip, and turning the shoulders.

Downswing

Good golf is played from the ground up, meaning that the feet, legs, and hips initiate the downswing

The main problem in the downswing is being able to co-ordinate the 2 movements of the downswing, which are, the unwinding of the hips, and the down swing of the arms, hands with the golfclub.

Most of the modern golf teachers advocate that the golfer's hip must lead the downswing and this is correct, however, they usually forget to add that you must swing the club down to the ball with your arms. It is the arms that make the actual swing. Swing them and the hands will naturally work.

The way you do so is to start the down swing with your hips, not your hands and arms. When your hips are pulling, your left arm is the primary lever, and the club is the secondary lever. The centrifugal force caused by your hips will then pull your arm, which in turn pulls the club. The angle between your arm and the club will actually get tighter at the beginning of the down swing because of the weight of the club head and the changing of the direction.

If these are neglected you will have too much body action relative to your clubhead.

As always in golf you can learn a lot from the way the ball reacts after you have hit it.

If you are slicing, topping, or hitting the ball thin, then it is possible (assuming your grip, setup and backswing are correct), that on the way down you have too much hip action relative to your arms.

The hip turn pulls the shoulders round, out and over with the right shoulder, while the club is still too high in the air. This throws your direction of swing from out to in across the target line, and forces the clubface to be open on impact.

In other words you are hitting 'too late' with your arms, hands and wrists.

Tip

Slow down or cut down your hip turn, and simultaneously quicken your increase your downward arm swing.

If you are pushing, fluffing or are a heavy hitter, then it is the arms are dominating the movement of the down swing. The club comes down too soon, causing you to hit the ground behind the ball. This action will cause the club to follow an in to out swing line compared to the targetline. This causes the clubhead to close and the ball to hook.

Tip

Speed up your hip turn, while slowing down your arm and hand swing.

The only way to correct and improve these faults is to practice until these movements become second nature.

Do not give up, the swing will improve even if you are not one for great practice, but enjoy just playing. Just play a few more rounds with friends.

The downswing is the most difficult part to master.

One last point, the faster you swing the club through impact the farther the ball goes. A problem that every golfer encounters is rushing the downswing, and the more that you do that the less everything works in sequence.

At Impact

Everything in the golf swing relates to impact. If you want to have control of the golf ball like the pros do, you need to have better control of the golf club and your body at impact. That's why it's so important to build a swing that produces a consistent and repeatable impact position.

At impact, there are the 3 factors, which we have been concentrating on, that influence the flight of the golf ball.

The swing path of the golf club (ie correct plane)
The position of the clubface relative to the target line. (ie Square)
The club is swinging in the right direction

And at this stage I will add one more which is:-
Clubhead speed.

These 4 impact factors determine all aspects of a golf shot with regards to distance, direction and trajectory.
Since the golf swing is a continuous motion, it's difficult to stop at impact to examine these factors.

So, in order to learn how to put the golf club and body into the proper impact positions for solid contact, you should develop your golf swing from the ground up.

By practicing with short swings and progressing to longer swings, you'll get a better feel for the impact factors and their effects.

It's also easier to learn the correct body and golf club positions with shorter, slower swings. You'll discover that short swings teach you to consistently find the centre of the clubface with your shots

You'll find that the basic arrangement of body and golf club at impact are the same, whether you're chipping, pitching or hitting full golf shots.

I would recommend the following drill to develop a consistent, controlled golf swing. By working on this drill when you practice, you'll groove a sound swing with an emphasis on control.

Drill

Arriving at the correct Impact Position

With a ball, set up in the address position, make a three-quarter backswing and slowly swing the club down to create the correct impact position. Learn to put your body and club in the correct impact position, even if in slow motion at first. This will help your brain communicate to your muscles just how you want your body and the club arranged when you strike the ball. Use a middle iron (no longer than a 6-iron).

Now simply extend the swings you've been making and introduce more body turn and greater clubhead speed without "swinging harder."

This longer swing will produce a slightly longer shot. As you practice this drill, pay close attention to the finish position. Your weight should be on your front foot with your eyes looking toward the target. Both arms should be extended. Your body should finish tall and in balance.

A solid impact position features contact with the ball first and a nice divot in front of where the ball was played. Remember, what gets the ball into the air is the design of the golf club and their varying degrees of loft, not an effort by the golfer to scoop the ball into the air.

Trust your equipment as well as your swing. In other words, let the club do its job.

Follow Through

A few words about the follow through after impact of the golf ball.

Again keep everything simple, and concentrate on swinging the club towards your target and allow your body to naturally unwind to the top.

At impact, the left arm is straight, and the right arm is almost straight. The hands are slightly in front of the ball.

Both arms stay straight about one-quarter of the way up in the forward swing. Then the left arm starts to imitate what the right arm did in the back swing. It will start to hinge, and the right arm will hinge with it.

Imagine that if you were to release the club after impact that the club would fly straight towards your target.

If you manage to get your club square to the target line at impact, with a good angle of approach, and it is pointing in the correct direction, our 3 original objectives then the follow through will be correct.

Up to now, I have not talked about the long game, the short game, or putting, so now is the time to put that right.

You will have mastered with some practice the art of hitting a golf ball, and remember that the main objective is to get the ball into the hole in as few shots as possible.

The techniques for hitting the ball will get you to move the ball closer to the hole, with the ball following your target line, now you must master the art of using different clubs to achieve this aim.

The fundamentals of the golf swing don't change. They're based on scientific facts such as power, thrust, centrifugal force, levers, and more.

As long as you're working on the fundamentals, you'll be working toward developing a consistently good golf swing.

When you improve the fundamentals of your swing, you'll hit the ball farther, and you'll also hit it straighter. Power and control go hand in hand. With the proper fundamentals, you'll have more power and control.

Final Thoughts

Picture your target in your mind's eye. Positive thinking and visualization will improve your game

Distance in golf is entirely the result of clubhead speed correctly applied.

Irons

According to Tiger Woods, the irons are the true offensive weapons in the golf armory. Why? Because that is where the purpose of getting the ball close to the flag or on the green really begins.

There are fourteen clubs in the bag, but this does not mean fourteen different swings.

The basic playing techniques remain unaltered no matter, which iron you have in your hand, if you want the ball to travel straight to your intended target.

From a scientific point of view, golf is a game of opposites. A lot of things that occur when the club strikes the ball are just opposite to what your instincts tell you should happen.

Countless golfers will try to assist the ball in getting airborne by swinging up on the ball, when in fact the opposite is true. In order to get the ball airborne hitting down and through the golf ball is the way of getting the ball airborne.

With the long irons you are still using a sweeping action.

You start by aiming the clubface squarely, where you want it to go, then align yourself squarely to the clubface. From this carefully planned setup, you make your body turn as stated before and swing down and through the ball. From the shape of the club themselves, this will lead to automatic modifications that are necessary between a long iron and a wedge.

Try to think of an as wide an arc as possible when on the backswing, and swing smoothly. The tendency is for most golfers to chop down on the ball instead of swinging smoothly through the ball.

With the shorter irons the shorter the club shaft, and the more lofted it is, the nearer you will stand to the ball, the closer your feet will move together, and the more you will lean over from the waist.

These automatic actions will steepen the angle of the swing, and thereby produce a downward hit which will impart backspin that controls the balls flight, distance and stopping power. Allow nature to act for you, do not force a different swing or style. Keep it simple.

The one thing that puzzles many golfers is that they hit short and medium irons fairly straight, yet with the same swing will badly slice their tee shots. This leads them to try all sorts of complicated compensations.

The fact is that the golfer with this problem is using a slice grip, setup, and swing for all his shots, but the type of spin imparted on the ball by the lofted clubs hide and disguises the fault.

The straight face club will sweep into the ball and give it a side spin, whereas the more lofted club will contact the ball further down on the ball giving it more backspin than side spin and the backspin will largely nullify the slice.

So, from this, we can deduce that the straight- faced clubs are the ones that tell us what our true effectiveness is with our swing.

So to sum up this section, all clubs should swing alike.

Even though the wedge and short irons demand a more upright swing, basically the same swing can be used. The plane changes from the wedge through to the driver as shaft length dictates distance you stand from the ball, but every shot is hit with same constant swing.

The Short Game

There are two types of shot involved in the short game as it is called, and these are the pitch shot and the chip shot. Each type has its own characteristic and each shot should be chosen where appropriate.

The main problem is that many golfers tend to use only one club for any shot around the green. This is the wrong approach. It is much better to understand the difference of the two shots and more importantly where to use the shot chosen.

Why is this so important?

This area along with putting is where you really can save the number of shots taken in a round of golf, and hence lower your handicap.

There is nothing more satisfying than chipping or pitching the ball close to the hole, so that you have a chance of a single putt. And when you learn to control this shot time and time again, it does really sharpen up your score.

Chip Shot

The chip stroke is simple. It is an easy action controlled by the shoulders more than the arms and hands. You don't need much force. The goal is to hit the ball solidly making sure the clubhead is travelling downward at the moment it strikes the ball.

In chipping the basic idea is to hit the ball forward with minimum back spin, allowing the loft of the club to determine the flight and roll of the ball.

As you get closer to the hole, it is even more critical that you think about alignment, even although it looks an easy shot.

Take your grip and aim the club head first, then begin to take your stance parallel to your target line.

There are two essential points, the first is to place your weight more on your left side, leaning on your left leg. Secondly, is to ensure that your hands are leading the club, around 3 inches ahead of the ball when you are addressing the ball.

The reason is to allow you to strike very slightly downwards on the ball, and allow the loft of the club to do the work of lifting the ball. Do not scoop the ball up as so many golfers do, when they try to chip.

Play the ball back in your stance.

Stand so that you are slightly open to the hole with your feet. This allows your arms to swing easily past your body and straight through to the target. Keep your shoulders square to target line. Keep your eyes on the back of the ball.

Start the backswing with your shoulders, allowing the arms and hands to follow. Tempo is important, there is no real need to rush this shot.

A good thought is to return the arms to the position that they were in at the address. That means your hands are ahead of the ball. No scooping!

The strength of the hit determines the distance that you are going to send the ball. This is controlled by the length of your backswing, not by muscular force!

So the final part of your preparation is to mentally assess how long a backswing you will need to give the ball the required loft and roll.

The worst error in chipping is trying to help the ball into the air by unlocking those wrists too early. Don't do it!

The second biggest error in poor chipping is taking too short a backswing, then stabbing the ball in an effort to make it go further. Always take a few practice swings to get a feel of the distances. All the pros do this.

When facing a chip across a long green, put the ball back in your stance, close the face of the club, and take it back inside the target line. In effect, you will be hooking the shot, and the ball will come out low and running.

Don't use a wedge with too much bounce - the trailing edge hanging lower than the leading edge. Clean contact is easier with a flat-soled club.

A tight lie makes many golfers feel just that - tight. When there's little grass under the ball, they feel the need to help it into the air, and "helping" creates tension. This is especially true when chipping: the muscles in the hands and arms tighten, making it difficult to hinge the club up in the back swing, as it naturally should. The result is a very low-to-the-ground swing and, more often than not, a thin shot that runs well past the hole.

To get the ball up from a tight lie, the clubhead must be swinging down into impact. A descending hit produces the contact and spin necessary to create height, allowing the ball to clear any rough or fringe and land softly on the green.

Remember to use the length of the backswing to determine the length of the shot. Keep the hands relaxed so the clubhead accelerates into the back of the ball. Master this technique, and you can handle even the tightest lies.

Chipping is very similar to putting in that there is no body motion, it is simply shoulders and arms. There is no pivot. If you can learn the proper technique in chipping, you are guaranteed to take strokes off your score.

Don't confuse a chip with a pitch. They are very different techniques. A chip is more like a putt in that there is no pivot. A pitch is more like a regular shot there is a pivot

Pitch Shot

The pitch is not the longest shot in the game, but it requires a lot more hand, arm and body action than the chip shot.

The secret to hitting the ball high is not to force it. The setup is always the same, except that you vary the ball placement and the angle of the clubface according to the amount of height and forward trajectory that you require.

The big difference is the swing. In the chip shot there is little wrist action, in pitching it is essential that you use the wrist action.

Try to keep the wrists cocked until late in the downswing..

Again most golfers do not hit down on the ball, they tend to try to scoop the ball up to make it rise.

To overcome this tendency, keep your weight on your left side.

Judge your distance by the length of your backswing.

Choose a lofted club, and open up your stance by aligning your feet left of the target line. Open the clubface slightly to increase loft and play the ball forward of your normal position.

Let the club do the work. Pick the club up steeply on the backswing allowing your wrists to cock naturally.

Your main downward thought should be to slide the clubhead under the ball making sure you are accelerating through it

Do not scoop the ball.

Always keep your hands leading the ball at impact, and swing down crisply. The follow through will be shorter than normal

Few golfers will ever emulate the top professionals with woods and irons, but with intelligent practice all golfers can master chipping and pitching.

This is the real secret to reducing these scores.

It is common knowledge that many golfers shun the three-quarter swing because they believe themselves prone to the miss shot whenever they don't give the club a full belt. This is taking the wrong point of view. This shot is a great shot to have in your armoury as it can be used to great effect in windy and other conditions.

It calls for a shorter swing rather than three-quarter power. Simply move your grip another inch down the shaft to give you a better feel and hit as hard as usual.

Practice making half and three-quarter shots and these will give you added confidence in anticipating the type of shot to play in unusual weather conditions. Again leading to lower scores.

Sometimes using a 9 iron instead of a wedge is the better play. Less loft, can lead to better feel, especially in the wind. Play the half or three-quarter shot and keep the ball lower.

When facing a pitch shot from greenside rough, set your club on the toe and address by raising your hands on the grip. This makes it easier to get the ball in the air, and it keeps the clubface open through impact.

Better players can hit lofted pitches with a sand wedge even if it has some bounce. Set the club's toe behind the ball and hold the shaft nearly vertical, raising the heel of the club in the air. Because there is less bounce under the toe, you can use your normal swing to make clean contact, and still impart plenty of loft.

The Lob Shot

The lob shot is probably the last shot you would want to hit around the green. The percentages of success are against you on this type of shot. It's much easier to pitch and run the ball on the green instead of trying to lob it on.

But with a few tips and some practice time, you can improve your chances for short game success no matter if you try to lob the ball on or run it up.

It's best to try the lob shot only when you have very little green to work with and your lie is good enough that you can slide the club underneath the ball. That's about the only time when it makes sense to try to hit the ball high and land it soft on the green.

Open the clubface to add extra loft to the shot.

Aim left of your target. The ball will spin to the right when it lands on the green.

Weight should be evenly distributed on both feet.

Finish with the clubface open (pointing up to the sky) to give the shot the loft and spin to stop the ball quickly on the green.

In playing a shot just over 30 yards with your sand wedge, I would ask you to give a lot of consideration to your posture and how you prepare to play this shot. It's important that you stay in your striking position through the strike and watch the ball roll to a stop.

Make your swing and strike the ball. Maintaining your spine angle throughout the entire shot allows your arms to swing freely and completely.

Sand shots

To most average golfers, playing a shot out of the sand remains something of a mystery. They watch with envy, bordering on awe, how the golf professional consistently blasts their golf shot out to within a few feet of the flag. You are left with the illusion that there is some secret to good bunker play.

There is no secret.

For general bunker shots, how well you play out of the sand is all to do with setup, application to the shot, and the right club.

This is a relatively simple shot, but to get the ball repeatedly close to the pin as the pro's do, requires experience of the type of sand, and the position of the ball in the sand, plus plenty of practice.

Firstly, align your feet, hips and shoulders to the left of the target. That allows you to have an out to in swing, with the club cutting across the sand and ball through impact. If you have watched professionals on TV, then I am sure you have observed them squirming around in the sand with their feet. They are only trying to ensure that they have a firm footing, at the same time as getting the feel of the texture of the sand.

Secondly, open the club face to the right of the target. The prime objective is to slide the club under the ball.

Any tendency to close the clubface will cause the leading edge of the club to dig into the sand.

Position the ball slightly forward in your stance, more opposite your left heel. This will give the ball a higher trajectory. Keep your hands level with the ball, not leading it.

Keep the grip light and maintain an easy rhythm and slow swing. The clubhead speed comes mainly from hands and arms. Cock your wrists early. This is a very hands orientated action. The whole sand shot should be played in slow motion. From start to finish.

If you require the ball to run after it hits the green aim for about 3 inches behind the ball. The ball will come out on a cloud of sand with very little back spin.

If you want the ball to come out high, hit about 1 inch behind the ball. The ball will have a lot of back spin and stop quickly.

The most common error for many golfers is that they de-accelerate through the ball at impact. **Always try to accelerate through the ball.**

Different techniques are required for the different sand situations.

Ball Plugged

If your ball is plugged, or lying down in the sand, it will be necessary to force the ball out by hitting down behind the ball with a sharp angle.

To do this, you must hood or close the clubface, so that the sharp edge of the sand wedge is the first part of the club to hit the sand.
Play the ball well back at address, and don't worry about follow through.
Allow for a lot of run on the ball when it lands.

Ball close to the steep face

Whenever you find ball close to the steep face of a bunker, blasting out may only give you a slight chance of success.
Look at all the options and maybe take a side way out, even if that means a longer putt to left or right of the hole.

Downhill Bunker Shot

For this shot try to set your body in such a manner as to be parallel to the angle of the slope. Try to ensure that your feet are well planted to avoid any slipping on the downswing.
Play the ball nearer the right foot, since the bottom of your swing will be reached sooner than usual.
Take the club up steeply, and bring it down sharply behind the ball, and try to follow the contour of the slope on the follow through.

Getting distance from the Bunker

Gaining distance from a fairway bunker is usually not too difficult. The basic idea is to choose a club which will be enough to clear the lip of the bunker, and if the lie is good, then the potential distance will be governed by the club chosen. Just accept the distance. My advice here is to assess which club will clear the top of the sand trap and take one more!

The technique is to hit the ball clean, without any sand, or the ball will not go as far. Set your feet solidly in the sand, grip down the club about an inch, and aim at the top of the ball. Move your weight over to the left side and have the ball back towards your right foot. On the downward swing ensure you lead with your hips.

High Bunker Shot

To hit a high bunker shot that stops quickly, set the blade of the sand wedge open at address, use a weak grip, and play the ball forward. Cock the club quickly and release your hands. The result is a high shot that lands dead.

Simplify your sand play by focusing on a few minor set-up adjustments and your clubface angle at address. These changes will allow you to vary your swing and therefore control the trajectory and distance of sand shots.

Remember the first rule is to get the ball out that is important, then at least you a chance of redeeming that shot with your next!

Putting

The main objective in putting is to get the ball into the hole in as few shots as possible. It does not matter what your putting stroke looks like as long as it provides a consistent stroke.

An average of 40 percent of the strokes you make in a game of golf will be putts.

Putting is incredibly important. Most people want to hit the ball farther and straighter. That's important, but effective putting makes the difference between an average golfer and a good golfer.

This is where many strokes can be saved, as on average it takes two putts on each green, which gives 36 strokes in a round. Professionals average under 30 strokes each round. Even if you are not that long a hitter, on the greens is where you can gain an advantage.

It is because this is such an important aspect of the golf game that many golf teachers will teach different techniques to achieve those low figures.

The first priority in putting is to assess the line and strength of the hit. Reading greens is a matter of intuition and experience.

Grip

A neutral grip is preferred. A grip is very individual in putting, there isn't one particular grip that is best.

The desired putting grip should place both hands in such a way as to keep the putter face square to the target line during the entire stroke. Bringing the clubface square to the target is controlled in putting, as it is in every other shot, by your grip.

Alignment

Always properly aim the club and yourself relative to the line once you have established it.

Stance

As with the putting grip, the stance is highly individual. You will, however get the most consistent results from using a square stance, parallel to the target line. Stance can vary from shoulder width to feet almost being together. There is a lot of flexibility here.

Posture

The posture is all about being comfortable. Most good putters bend from the waist, with feet solidly planted, with an even weight distribution. Place your head over the ball, or maybe just slightly behind the ball. Try to stroke, not punch, the ball, by swinging smoothly through. The most important point is to use your arms and shoulder as one unit, and keep your head perfectly still through the shot. The stroke should be like a pendulum on a clock.

Posture is generally the same as in a full swing: Back straight, bending at the hips, your knees may flex a little more than in the full swing if you like. Your arms and shoulders form a triangle. Whether your arms are straight or bent doesn't matter. It's that you maintain the way you're holding your arms throughout the stroke. So if they're straight, keep them straight; if they're bent, keep them bent. Don't change the angle of your arms during the putt.

Eyes directly over the ball.

Putting is a pendulum motion. Only the shoulders and the arms move. The hips and legs stay still.

Your wrists don't cock or hinge. Remember, they're only clamps holding the club! There isn't any weight shift in putting.

Ball position

There isn't one prescribed ball position, but most of the better players have a ball position that is toward the instep of the left foot.

Mental Approach

The biggest part of putting is the mental approach. Try to shut out the world around you during the preparation of the putt

Avoiding the three putt can be difficult. It is only natural that most three putts take place from long 30 to 40 footers.

Try to concentrate on distance. Try doing different experiments on the practice green just in case one technique starts to fail you on the golf course. For instance try looking at the hole one only for about 10 seconds, then look at the ball and stroke the ball towards the hole without re-looking at the hole. Try putting with your eyes closed. You will be amazed at how good you get.

Don't forget the mental side; tell yourself you are a great putter, and you're going to sink every putt you look at. Then practice to gain confidence in that belief.

False confidence is when you believe you can do something, but you don't have the experience to back up that belief. So first believe in yourself, then practice so that you'll be confident in that belief. Eventually, you'll be making your putts and loving it.

Good golfers work on their three to four foot putts until they're confident they'll always sink them. They learn how to read the green to see which way it will break, and when they do get bored, they work on 20 - foot putts! Try to hit five of those in a row!

Reading a Green

Reading a green is surveying a green, and determining how you need to hit the ball to make it go into the cup.

How do I determine the way the ball will roll? You have to be able to use your imagination here. Think of how water flows.

The water, and your ball will always go toward the lowest side of the green. It will go from the high side of the green to the low side.

If the green appears to have a lot of undulation, and you're not sure which way the ball will break, just remember, a hill always has a high side and a low side. The ball will naturally go towards the low side.

Picking a Target

You've determined the pitch of the green, and the way the ball will roll. Now you need to pick a target that will start the ball on that line. That target will be an intermediate target.

If you think the pitch of the green will naturally make your ball roll a little to the left of the cup, pick an intermediate target that will aim a little right of the cup.

Get behind the ball, about three to four feet, and crouch down so that you are looking through the ball at the cup. This is a very effective way to pick your intermediate target and determine the slope of the green.

Judging Distance

Now that you've determined the break in the green, and selected an appropriate intermediate target you need to figure out how far the ball has to go, and how hard you have to hit it to make it go in the cup.

When you throw a ball to someone, you don't have trouble getting it to them because you can see them. You can even throw a ball to someone who is moving without difficulty. But when you putt, you can't see the hole. So I encourage people to take a few practice swings looking at the hole. This gives them the ability to estimate the stroke they need to make when they are looking at the ball and not the hole. It gives them depth perception.

Finally, do ensure that you follow through on the putt, as this helps to assure a solid, on-line putt, and lessens the tendency to quit on the short putts.

Happy putting.

Conclusion

The more I play this game and observe the greats of this wonderful game, the more convinced I have become, that the key factor which affect the good golf shot is preparation. This means shot assessment, club selection, grip, aim, stance and posture. These are the foundations on which to build your game, and give yourself the chance of reaching your full potential as a golfer.

Do not forget what you hit the golf ball with, and that is the clubhead.

This appears to be overlooked or missed by the golf gurus, who are always trying to teach a method or technique.

Do not let the theoretical method blind you to the basic objective of the game, which is to propel the ball forward with the club in the intended line.

Always remember the 3 objectives when making a swing

At the moment the club face contacts the ball, 3 things are correct.

The face of the club is square to the target.

The club is swinging on the correct plane.

The club is swinging in the right direction.

This book has only dealt with half the game in my opinion, the art of shot making, or striking the ball.

Even if you have the ability to strike the most perfect shot in the world every time, you won't necessarily win matches or tournaments, unless you learn the mental attitude as well, and think your way round the course.

**Many games have been won by golfers, with inferior shot making skills,
Remember the game is about how many, - not how!**