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Contents

A Golf Facility	1
Dress	2
Equipment	2
Parts of a club	
Modern set of clubs	
Skill Development	4
Five Pre-Swing Fundamentals	
Putting Stroke – putting and chipping	
Swing Stroke – pitching, sand shots and full swing	
Practice Techniques	13
Maintenance practice, drills and tips	
Putting and chipping practice	
Pitching practice	
Full Swing practice	
Warm up practice	
Exercise, Nutrition, and Sun Protection	18
Health Benefits of Golf	20
Playing the Game	20
The Lighter Side of Golph	21
Swing Notes	22

This publication was written as a PGA Professional Certification Project in Player Development to assist new players starting golf and encourage former players to get back into the game. It is readily available to PGA members for use in their player development programs.

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PGA Certified Professional/Player Development

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Welcome to Golf



“The PGA of America has a long-term plan to improve the “pathways to the great game of golf” and enhance your learning experience from expert PGA instructors. Whether you are learning from the author Certified Professional Harold Bluestein or one of his equally dedicated colleagues, you will find this handbook an effective manual for navigating this difficult, yet rewarding game. Reading it will remind

you of the fundamentals you need to play your first round of golf or take your game to the next level. Remember golf is all about fun, family, and friends; so let’s go play!”

Monte Koch, *PGA Certified Professional
Regional Manager for Player Development
Pacific Northwest Section of the PGA of America*

A Golf Facility



The Clubhouse – Here you will find the **Pro Shop**. The professional counter staff will assist you with reserving a time to play (**tee time**), hours of operation, equipment needs and instructional programs. A visit to the course website should answer questions about other services they offer.

The Golf Course – There are three types of courses. All will have either 9 or 18 holes. An “Executive Course” has only par 3 and par 4 holes. A “Par 3” course will only have par 3 holes. A “Regulation 9 or 18-hole Course” will have a combination of par 3, par 4 and par 5 holes. “Par” is assigned to a hole based on its length. An **expert** is expected to reach the shortest hole, a par-3 green in one shot and **putt** (the short strokes with a flat faced club called a **putter**) twice, reach a par-4 in two shots and putt twice and reach the longest hole, a par-5, with three shots and again putt twice. An 18 hole course and is divided into two 9-hole layouts, the **front 9** and the **back 9**. Most play begins on the front 9.

Every hole has sections as defined below:

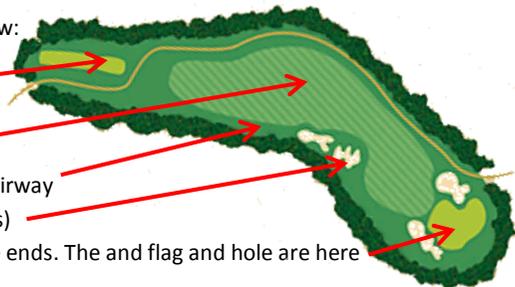
Tee box - Where the hole begins

Fairway – The grass between the tee box and the green

Rough - The long grass bordering the fairway

Water hazards and bunkers (sand traps)

Green – The short grass where the hole ends. The and flag and hole are here



- Ball position is determined by placing your hands about five to seven inches away from your left thigh. Notice in the photos below one player has an iron the other a driver and though the ball is different distances from their feet their postures and hand positions are very similar.



Alignment -

- As with putting and chipping use the same railroad track or parallel line image to aim.
- Notice that the player in the photo left uses two clubs to aid in his alignment and one club for his ball position as he practices.



Posture - Similar to the pitch

- Bend forward from your waist keeping your back as straight as possible. Avoid rolling your shoulders or back (photo below left).
- Flexing your knees slightly will take stress off your lower back and improve your balance.

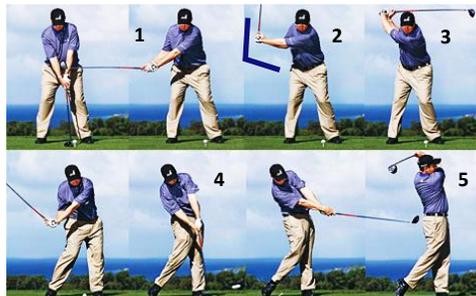


- Your club shaft points to your belt line and inside your left thigh (photo right).
- Your right shoulder is lower than your left creating a slight tilt, which is more obvious with the longer clubs. Notice the "Y" position again with the arms and the club.



Making the Swing Stroke - full swing

- You are now making a much longer motion than the pitch. Notice in the photo as the player's hands pass his right thigh (1) his wrists hinge moving the club head up creating the letter "L" formed by his left arm and the club shaft. At the same time his right elbow bends. (2)
- He continues turning his chest, tummy, and hips (**his core**) with his hands and arms to the top of the backswing. (3) **Note:** His hands remain in front of his chest!
- Swinging forward, his **core** rotates toward the target as his wrists unhinge and right arm straightens returning the "L" to the "Y" as he swings through the ball. (4)

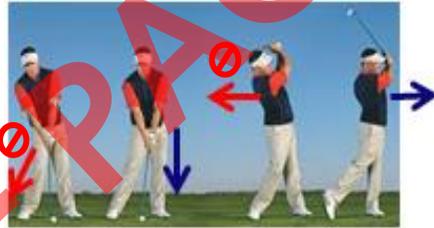


He continues to the finish allowing his elbows to bend. Notice his right heel is off the ground and he is facing his target. (5)

Note: A full swing with your driver, the longest and least lofted club, will hit the ball the greatest distance while **the same swing** with your sand wedge, the shortest and most lofted club, hits the ball the shortest distance.

Quick tip for full swing success

- **Full swing** - Finish your swing with nearly all of your weight on your left leg, **not your right**. Your hips, chest and eyes all face the target and you are in balance. **Tip:** Avoid swinging any faster than you can maintain your balance.



More on the full swing: The three most common questions (???)



- Why do I top the ball? (The club contacts the top of the ball and the ball doesn't get up in the air (photo left).
- Why does my ball always fly right?
- Why can't I hit the ball very far?

Below are the six most common swing errors causing these ball flight problems and how to fix them!



1. The **spine angle** is the angle created while bending forward from your waist at **set-up** (photo left). If you change your spine angle significantly up (photo right) or down as you swing you risk a poor shot.



Fix: Keep your spine angle constant until after you hit the ball by imagining the distance from your sternum (as indicated by the yellow arrow) to the ball **does not change** from set-up through impact (photo right).

