

Tips to improve your back swing?

The key to a natural back swing is to focus on your shoulders turning back and letting your arms go back naturally. You shouldn't worry about your arms in a back swing too much. The arms and hands job is to only hold onto the club and the body does the rest. Something to keep in mind while approaching the ball is: turn the shoulders, swing the arms, and cock the wrists. Then swing down and through the swing, turn the hips, swing the arms down and un-cock the wrists. You want the arms and golf club to start their movement back before the shoulders start turning. The club head has a much longer distance to travel to the top of the back swing than the shoulders. If you start turning the shoulders with the club, hands and arms you won't have anywhere for them to go once the shoulders have reached their max turn. Once the club, hands and arms reached your knees (or so) then it's time for the shoulders to catch up and start turning to the top. Keep the left arm straight (right handed players) during the backswing and go back as far as you can. Your tempo is dictated really by your personality, some people are naturally slow movers so will have a slower tempo while others tend to move faster. The important thing is to do what is most comfortable for you.

How to hit a draw?

A draw requires that the club be moving close to along the target line and strike the ball with the clubface slightly closed. You have to be sure that you're really closing the face relative to

your hands, not just rotating your hands so the face is closed at address. Also make sure that you've adjusted your stance so that the ball takes off on the line you intended, not in a pull direction right into the tree that you're trying to draw around. A draw, or hook, shot starts right and then curves left. Use it when a direct shot at your target is blocked, for example on a dogleg hole or if you need to curve the shot around some trees that are in the way. The draw is more of a subtle curve than the hook, which is very strong and often end up in the rough unless you did it deliberately and calculated it into your aim. The draw starts off pretty straight and then starts to fall off to the left. A draw shot makes the ball roll further when it lands because it puts a forward spin on the ball. Note that these steps are intended for right-handers - reverse them if you're left-handed.

Set up your golf shot with your usual alignment and grip. Adjust your feet to aim to the right of your target. The angle of your feet depends on your individual swing and desired results, and can range from 5 to 45 degrees. Try 10 to 15 degrees to the right to start. Aim the club face directly at your target and use your normal grip. Swing normally. Resist the temptation to turn too soon and watch the ball's flight.

How to hit a fade?

Often when you're playing a dog leg right hole you'd like your drive to start off fairly straight but end up right - this is when you'd like to hit a fade shot off the tee. To hit a fade, you need to follow a few simple steps at alignment that will help

create the swing path that will put the proper spin on the ball to make it travel to the right. The following steps are for right handed golfers, if you're a lefty, just reverse the directions.

Address the ball on the tee with your standard alignment and grip. After you've setup as usual, you'll want to aim your feet to the left of your target. You'll want to adjust the aim of your feet about 10 to 15 degrees more than your traditional alignment. You can adjust this angle when you practice to get a feel for how different alignments affect the trajectory of the ball's flight path. Now, aim an open club face directly at your target and maintain your regular grip. Take your normal swing and your ball should fade. Avoid the temptation of modifying your swing too much to 'force' a fade. Let your alignment and the club do the work. Make sure you practice this at the driving range before you attempt this on the course. When you are learning, an attempted fade can very easily turn into a severe slice and you can end up in unplayable territory. As with anything in golf, don't get frustrated if you don't master this shot immediately. Practice makes perfect!

What is the cause for hitting the ball off the toe of the club and what is a good drill to correct this?

One possible cause is you are standing too far away from ball. Every individual golfer has to find what distance is comfortable to them. Try moving closer to the ball little by little until you start making solid contact. You may also want to try addressing the ball on the heel of the club. Coming over the top

is also a potential cause of this problem. When the club approaches the ball from outside the ball-to-target line it will travel too much to the inside after impact. This is called an out-to-in swing path and is also at the same time very steep. The only part of the clubface that can contact the ball is the toe end. This happens all too often when a player uses tries to use their muscle strength and swings too hard at the ball causing an in-to-out path.

Here is one tip to correct this problem and shallow out your swing plane. Take a 7 iron and stand with your feet together and make shorter swings with mostly the arms. Make sure that you hinge your wrists in the back and through swings. This will give you a better feel for the club head and teach you how to swing the club head through the ball rather than hitting at it. You will be very surprised how far you can hit the ball with this drill and how much easier it is to hit the middle of the club. Effortless power is the secret.

How to better align yourself toward the target?

Alignment is a key element to an accurate golf swing. Here is a simple drill I use while at the practice range. Place two clubs down on the ground, one club will be for your swing path, the other for positioning your feet. Align the clubs parallel to the target. Never point one or the other directly at the target. If one is pointed at the target than the other is pointed off in the wrong direction. Practice for several minutes and you will start to get

the hang of where to aim each time. Another thing to keep in mind is your shoulder alignment.

Before swinging, take your club and place the shaft across both shoulders so that it forms a line that you can use to align your shoulders to the target. It is also important that you have the same thought when it comes to your hips. If you can imagine these two lines when you are addressing the ball and keep both of them parallel to each other and on target it will help you a great deal. Most alignment problems stem from these two lines not being correctly aligned together. From that point you can open or close your stance to fit the shot you are trying to achieve.

Once you are out on the course, take your time to align yourself before every shot. When addressing the ball, pick a spot in front of the ball that is on the ball aiming line. As you step into position, line up your club face perpendicular to the ball aiming line which you determine by using the spot in front of the ball and the ball itself. Once the club is in place, position your body parallel to the ball line. So your shoulders, hips and feet should be aimed left of the target. Some people like the visual of a railway track. The ball and club face are on one track and your body is on the other.

How do you stop lifting your head when driving the ball?

There isn't anything physical or mental that is making your head move. It is simply a bad habit. Most golfers can't wait to

see their shot, which in most cases results in their head lifting too soon.

Take dozens of practice swings, very slowly, keeping the head down. Gradually pick up the speed of the swing doing a few dozen after each increase in speed. After you've gotten the speed up and feel comfortable, go to a driving range and start hitting balls. Think of it this way. The swing isn't finished until you've followed through. Lifting your head becomes part of the swing. Just focus on keeping your head down, don't worry about the result of the shot. Once you've managed to keep your head down then start worrying about the result.

How to Chip With a Hybrid

Position the ball close to the center of your stance and set your weight slightly more onto your left foot. Choke down on the grip far enough that you can take your putting stance comfortably when putting the club behind the ball.

Make a swing similar to your putting action, but add a little more wrist motion to free up your swing through the ball. Avoid becoming too stiff, as that will cost you the feel for the distance. For longer chips, you can add a little forward knee movement, which will also help you make a free and relaxed stroke.

Swing the club with a pendulum action, keeping the triangle formed by your arms and shoulders in place. This is the same motion recommended for putting, but with the extra wrist action added, particularly on the longer chips.

Accelerate smoothly through the ball, rather than hitting at it. The loft of the club will lift the ball over the longer grass around the green

If you're not a confident chipper, experiment with using the hybrid for any chip from the fringes of the green, but not in the rough. The fact that you can use a setup and swing similar to your putting stroke helps with the feel for distance. If you tend to hit chips fat or thin, the hybrid is also a good solution, as the rounded sole prevents the leading edge from digging into the ground. Practice the stroke to help you get the feel for the distance and your confidence around the greens should increase.

How do you fix the problem of your hands and arms moving faster on the downswing than your lower body?

If you have reached the top of your backswing, properly coiled and the club is pointing parallel to the target, you are in great position. If you uncoil your hips without a transfer to the left the result will be an "over the top move". The right shoulder will move toward the target line and you hang back onto your right foot as the body spins out to the left. The result is a pull slice if the clubface is square and a pull to the left if the clubface is closed.

When you are ready to swing down let your right shoulder move downward toward the right foot! Sounds crazy? I know but try it. The right elbow will move into your side and the weight will be transferred laterally. The butt of the club will start to point toward the target. It's now on plane and all that's left to do is to

straighten the left leg which will then open the lower body as you approach impact. Remember the magic move! Move the right shoulder toward the right foot to start the downswing.

What simple drill can I do to cure my slice?

Try hitting your driver with your feet together. Swing as smooth as you can while staying in balance. Doesn't matter how far you hit the ball. With your feet still together, gradually swing harder, again within balance. The ball will almost always go straight, draw, or even hook. Once you get that down, start to widen your stance, eventually getting back to your normal set-up. Also 90% of golfers swing the club too fast and thus throw themselves off balance. Many people have a different swing speed between their driver and irons. Many times people swing the driver way too hard and their hips turn quicker than their hands which leads to the hands never catching up resulting in a push/slice etc.

Slow down your swing to about 80%. The main problem with this is most people don't want to slow down because they want to kill it!! Remember, a 300+ yard drive is no good when its 2 holes over! One of the analogies I like to use is "How to hammer nails into a wall". Do you swing as hard as you can? No. Because you would not hit the nail squarely so you swing with control. Golfers need to do the same with their driver and all their clubs.

How do I correct my Outside-In swing path?

Do not let your right hand overpower the swing. When we try to hit it hard, we tend to throw our right hand out creating an outside-in swing path. When you address the ball, pretend that it is divided into 2 halves; the dividing line is the target line. In your downswing, pretend to hit the half that is closer to you and miss the outer half. If this is hard to imagine, place a shoe box a few inches in front of the ball (the ball should be between you and the box) and try to hit the ball without hitting the box. This will automatically give you the feeling of an inside out swing.

In slow motion, go to the top of your back swing. Keep your right elbow close to your body, and pull the club down with your left hand. When your left hand reaches close to your thigh, the club should be parallel to target line. The end of the handle should be facing towards the target and the club head should point in the opposite direction. From there go back to the top of the backswing and pump back and forth, keeping your right elbow close to your body all the time.

How much should I lean the shaft into a shot?

Proper shaft lean promotes the proper launch angle at impact position, where your hands lead the ball. The proper shaft lean will vary depending on the shot you're trying to achieve. On a windy day where a lower trajectory is needed, more shaft angle is needed. Some good players can start with no lean but end up with the proper shaft lean at impact. I don't want to make my swing too complicated so I start my setup with the proper shaft lean. Improper shaft lean will result in adding

loft to the club, losing yardage, and possibly causes you to come over the top of the ball instead of from the inside out.

How to correct the arms from swinging too far away from the body?

We've been told to keep our arms relaxed and straight to produce a nice wide arc but too often we're "reaching" our arms too far away from our body. We are relying entirely on our arms to produce the swing instead of "coiling" our arms around our shoulders and hips then unwind on the down swing. To keep your swing compact and connected to your shoulders try putting a piece of paper (or golf glove) under BOTH your armpits and you must keep them in place until after impact (and release).

Most likely you will not be able to do a full back swing (unless you are flexible enough to do a full shoulder/hip turn). Most people are not very flexible and end up with at most a 3/4 swing. Because your arms are now connected to your shoulders and coiling around your body, it's easy to repeat and improved your consistency and ball striking.

What drill improves hitting the ball square at impact?

By keeping your left wrist flat from setup to back swing, you're keeping the club face square to the target along the swing path and increase your chances of hitting the ball square. A flat left wrist keeps your hands quiet, and in conjunction with connected arms in your swing and a proper shaft lean at impact, you will allow the club to hit the ball instead of your wrists trying

to manipulate it. Don't worry about intentionally cocking your wrists during the back swing. If you coil your arms around your body with proper shoulder/hip turn your wrists will automatically cock but will still keep the left wrist flat. On the down swing, you will be able to feel the weight of the club and it is this momentum that creates the club head speed and power to strike the ball.

Your left wrist will still be flat at impact which is why it's helpful to know what that position feels like during setup. Then your wrists will release after impact till the follow through. This is how you "hit the ball" first and "take the divot" in front of the ball naturally without purposely trying to hit the spot in front of the ball.

How to perfect the Flop Shot?

Select the right type of sand wedge. Forget anything less than 60 degrees. You need a great deal of loft to produce height on the shot. You want that 60-degree model to have bounce located near the rear of the club head. That way, the club head will slide through the turf rather than bounce off it, while at the same time preventing the leading edge from digging into the ground, causing a fat shot. Virtually every 56-degree model has the bounce positioned too far forward, near the leading edge of the clubface. That causes the club head to bounce off the turf into the middle of the ball, resulting in a low beeline over the green.

Assess your lie carefully. If your lie is fluffy, the ball suspended above the ground but within the grass, you'll need to

produce a more level, shallow angle of approach through impact. Otherwise, the club will slide right under the ball and you'll be lucky to hit it two feet. If you're playing off a tight, hardpan lie, on the other hand, you'll need a bit more of a descending blow--though not steep by any means. Don't force the issue. Position the ball off the heel of your leading foot. Align your feet and shoulders open, but aim the clubface at the target. Make a full backswing. On the downswing, don't hurry to swing the club head into the ball. Let gravity do the work. You want "soft" momentum.

Finally you want to strike the ground an inch or so behind the ball. In that sense, the flop shot is like a shot from sand. It explodes off a cushion of grass and turf. You rely on the trajectory of the ball, not backspin, to stop it quickly on the green.

Does having a club fitted improve your play?

Fitted clubs can drastically change your play. You can drop anywhere from 5-10 strokes by getting your clubs fitted. Getting your clubs fitted is one of the best things you can do to improve your golf game. You won't have to be complaining if the club is too big, too small, too steep, or too low. Make sure they also do fitting on your club face for irons. Sometimes when you are already on your posture, the heel of the club might be the only thing that is touching the ground or the tip of the club face. Some aspects of the club to consider are; shaft flex, shaft flex

point, shaft length, club lie, club loft and grip size. Working with a qualified Club Fitter is a great way to get you properly setup.

Why does a draw go farther than a slice?

A draw usually has a lower trajectory so you get more roll once the ball hits the ground. "Draw" and "slice" are not mirror golf shots. For a right handed golfer, a draw moves gently from right to left, a hook moves severely from right to left, and a fade moves gently from left to right, a slice moves severely from left to right.

A draw tends to have over-spin, which will cause it to run, where a fade tends to have backspin and lands "soft".

How to play out of a bunker?

To play the shot, take an open stance and then open the face of your club. Position the ball so it's up in your stance, about even with the heel of your front foot. With your swing, you want to try and slide the club under the ball so don't hit down, but rather through. Most importantly aim to hit the sand about four to six inches behind the ball. Avoid the most common error I see among amateurs. Don't just stick your club into the sand, follow through. If you do all this, your club should slide under the ball, which will pop up and out of the bunker. This ball will have a lot of spin on it so it won't roll too far after it lands. Hitting bunker shots should be a regular part of your practice routine. Make sure you hit at least 10 to 15 shots from the sand in every practice session.

Most times in a bunker, your ball will come to rest on top of the sand, sitting up nicely. However, there are times when your ball will plug in the sand, so it is almost buried and you can only see the top of the ball.

To get this ball out requires a different type of shot and different expectations. Your aim here is merely to get the ball out of the sand and onto the green. Don't be too worried if you don't get it close to the pin. To play this shot, stay with the open stance but this time keep the face of the club square to the target line. Keep most of your weight on your front foot and play the ball back in your stance. With the previous shot, you wanted to avoid digging the club in the sand. With this shot, dig the club in about two inches behind the ball using a very up and down stroke. Don't be afraid to swing hard as it will take some effort to get this ball out. A follow-through is good, but don't be too worried if you don't. If you play this shot properly, the ball should pop up and out, and hopefully onto the green.