



# Perfecting Your Golf Swing

So you've seen Tiger elegantly making that last hole down the course and from that scene you realize one thing: you want to learn how to play this game.

However, you have one tiny problem. You have never picked up a golf club before and you have never played a game of golf your entire life. And with so many things to learn about golf from equipment to handicap and motion, where do you begin?

The quickest and most effective way of playing golf – or any game at all for that matter – is through study and practice. Not only will you get theoretical knowledge of what to do and how to do it, but you get an opportunity to put that knowledge to the test out there on the field...err, course.

For beginners, the goal is to develop the skills and techniques necessary to get on the game. But once you have been on the course for quite some time, your goals change. You have all the skills you need. Now, what you are going to require is judgment. And that, my friend, is something you can only get from experience.

So knowledge and practice, they go hand-in-hand. And for beginners in golf like you are, those two things are the shortest route to playing this game.

## **Lesson #1: The Importance of Motions**

The presumption is that golf is easy. I mean, how difficult is it to swing a golf club?

Well, if you think the first part then you are right. Golf is indeed easy and anyone, regardless of age and natural abilities, can play an enjoyable game of golf.

But then again golf is not just about knowing how to swing a golf club. To better explain to you what this means, let us veer away from golf for a moment and head on to more familiar territory, like baseball for instance.

When you hit a baseball with your bat, you don't just swing mindlessly at the ball, right? You also think of strategy because after all you can't always hit a homerun so sometimes you want to hit the ball towards the midfielder or let it roll and make the pitcher scramble for it as you run for the base.

The same thing applies with golf. Sure, the force of your swing matters but if your accuracy is so bad that you end up playing out of the course for of the game, then that is something that needs to be worked on.

Furthermore, how about when you are down to the last hole and you are only about ten feet away from victory? You don't need a big swing for that. You need balance, sound judgment, and controlled motion. And *those* are the things that you ought to learn.

There are five basic bodily motions that you want to learn in order to play golf. These motions pertain to the five parts of your body that you will often use when playing golf:

- Feet
- Legs and knees
- Hips and shoulders

- Arms
- Hands and wrists

The most important thing to remember when putting these parts into action is to think of them not as distinct and separate sections. Instead, think of them as one, something that makes a lot more sense, considering how all the five basic motions incorporate your whole body other than your head.

Now, in the next few lessons you will take a closer look at how each of these parts can contribute to solid playing in golf, working from the ground up as opposed to “from the hands down.”

## **Lesson #2: Get Those Feet Working**

You might wonder what foot has got anything to do with golf. Other than for walking all over the golf course, you also need your feet for something much more instrumental to the game.

Think of a building, for a moment. A building needs a strong foundation in order to continue standing. Like a building, a good golfer needs a strong foundation in order to play a solid game.

Your feet provide that foundation, because even as your hands have the only connection with the club, your feet have the only contact with the ground. And more importantly, your feet serve as the starting point of the line of flight or that imaginary line between the ball and the target.

There are three basic stances to get those feet of yours to work. These are:

- **Square** – In this stance, both your feet are positioned at an equal distance from the line of flight. This is the basic standard stance and something that all golf beginners should master. The square stance serves as the proving ground for compactness and control.
- **Closed** – Put your left forward, just a few inches nearer to the line of flight than your right foot. When you want to draw or hook the ball, this is the basic stance you need.
- **Open** – The complete opposite of the closed stance, this stance has your left foot drawn back farther away from the line of sight than your right. This stance is often recommended for fading or slicing the ball to the right of your intended target.

When performing all these stances and addressing the ball, remember to place your heels at a certain distance, approximately the same as the width of your shoulders. You should also make sure that your weight is evenly distributed in the balls of your feet.

Now, roll your left foot gently inwards towards your right foot. Don't move your right foot when you start to swing. The left foot will do the work with as little movement as possible, thus initiating the next set of body motion to get working – knee action.

### **Lesson #3: Flex Those Knees**

Foot action was all about the set up. Like shooting a basketball, first you need to spread your legs just so, dribble the ball a little bit, get a clear view of the basket,

bend your knees, and raise your arms, before you finally get around to shooting the ball into the hoop. It is pretty much the same thing with almost any kind of ball game. It always starts with the foot, building up towards your ultimate goal.

Now that you have learned the basic about golf foot work from Lesson #2, it is now time for you to build up the movement and connect it with your knees, which provides the next basic bodily motion.

Okay, so here is the set up: Your feet are slightly spread. Now, flex your knees slightly. As your left foot starts to roll inside towards the inside of your braced right leg, the next natural motion is for you knees to go along with your foot action.

This is actually one of the benefits of knee motions in golf. Because the movement is so natural, you do not even have to put too much thought into it. In fact, you can even consider the whole foot/knee action as a “2-in-1” motion. Just remember one thing: Your knees must remain *flexed* throughout the whole swing and your right leg must remain braced.

Think of your right leg as the fulcrum of a seesaw. It must remain steady, solid, and unbent even as your left does all that twisting and rolling. As your center, it provides you with balance and stored up power in your swing.

You know you are doing things right because your legs form the letter “K” on your takeaway. When this happens, it means that you have properly synched your foot work and leg/knee action as you made your swing.

#### **Lesson #4: Hips and Shoulders**

If the foot is for set up and the knees for storing up power, then what are the hips and shoulders for? For using all that stored up power, of course!

Think of yourself as a human spring. After successfully performing all the prior bodily motions, you are now in perfect position to pull back the club head to the top of your back in preparation for a swing.

Using gravity and the force of your swing as momentum let your shoulders and then your hips follow the movement as you hit the ball.

However, the key point here is not on hitting the ball but on your hip and shoulder action. Your hip movement should be very minimal. By turning your hip just a little, you are making sure that you are building up a rubber band effect. Thus, when you turn your shoulders as comfortably against your right hip as you can, you got more power in your back swing. Power gets added when your braced right leg releases some of it as soon as your club head swings down.

Now, it is at this point that flexibility becomes an issue. Some people may find it difficult to twist their shoulder and hips that far. However with time and practice, each person can actually maintain this position. Just perform daily stretches and exercise in order to elongate your muscles. The stronger you get, the more distance your swing gets.

## **Lesson #5: Ball Stroking**

So now that you know all the right body motions to make a solid swing, we are now down to the most important step of all. No, it is not called “ball hitting” because you do not actually hit the ball when you play golf. You *stroke* it.

Many people make that mistake when they should remember the one thing about golf that makes it different from any other ball sport, so to speak.

Golf is not about brute force. It is not about stealing the ball from another player. It is not about hitting the ball as far as you can in order to put the other player in a difficult situation.

Golf is about the individual, the player, *you*. Not the *you* against the opponent. But just *YOU*. When you are playing golf, you are playing not against anybody but *with* everybody. Golf is about the individual *with* the incorporation of everything that surrounds that individual – the grass, the wind, the weather, the ground, the club, the ball, and so on. And so we have these five basic bodily motions that you *incorporate* into a single, fluid movement – the swing.

But even the perfect swing becomes pointless without its target. Sure, you may have a strong swing in you but the difference between a strong, distance swing and a mindless hack is in how you stroke the ball. What if the putt is short? This is the best way to measure how good you are with your strokes.

When the putt is short, you are in position to channel your motion from the feet up to your shoulders, tempering everything down to focus only on accuracy and control. And once you perfect this shot, then you are on your way to increasing your accuracy in longer shots as well.