

# **The Functional Golf Swing**

by  
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## **Introduction**

Golf is one of the greatest challenges in the world! Why? Because it confronts your every emotion each time you play it. There has never been a more truthful statement than: "Golf is like life, it doesn't always go your way." Like life, how you react to these unforeseen challenges will determine your success.

After almost 30 years of teaching beginners to successful Tour players, I can tell you there are four characteristics you need if you are to improve. They are:

1. Passion or Desire, which generates Energy
2. Belief
3. Knowledge
4. "Try Until" attitude

## **Passion/Desire = Energy**

If you have passion/desire it will, in most cases, help produce energy. It is what makes you get up in the morning and drives you to improve. If you do not have this energy your body and mind simply will not let you continue your quest for improvement. You need energy to get excited about the challenges, successes, and disappointments you will be facing during your training.

Although passion and desire help to generate energy, your diet and personal habits affect your energy level more. Proper and consistent eating and sleeping habits enhance the learning process by improving energy levels. Be aware that your diet directly affects your energy and therefore your success.

## **Belief**

Belief is powerful! Be very careful what you say; whether you say you can or you say you can not, you are correct. What you are placing in your brain are called embedded commands and you will make them come true. With golf, you must believe you can do it and then take the steps to support and confirm your beliefs. This is accomplished by gaining better skills through more knowledge, and you do it by having a plan, strategy, or blueprint to follow. You can accelerate your skills and therefore strengthen your beliefs by following a complete plan, strategy, or blueprint.

## **The Blueprint**

Although you can use the word "plan" or "strategy," I prefer to use "blueprint." Most people can relate to a blueprint, its simplicity and the importance of following it in order so that the building is constructed correctly.

We have found that when people understand where they are going, why, and what they will have to do to get there, they can commit. A clearly defined, easy-to-follow blueprint will strengthen belief and commitment. Once we have commitment, belief, and a good blueprint to

follow then success is imminent. Thus it becomes easy for students to take an “I’m going to keep at it until I get it” attitude; history has proven that this approach produces unbelievable results.

### “Try Until”

Isn’t it interesting how many people we meet who tell us that they have tried golf “a couple of times” then quit. What they expected to happen very quickly did not, so they gave up.

What if we took this approach when teaching our children how to walk? What if we only gave them a couple of chances? Would you do this? Does anyone you know do this? I suspect the answer is no. Parents would never do this, they are of the mind-set that “my child will **try until** they learn to walk.” WOW! What a great approach!

How many times have we heard parents, or even experienced it ourselves, tell stories about a child coming to them with a math problem and say, “I can’t do it.” The parent sends the child back to their room and says, “keep trying.” The child keeps coming back with the same “I can’t” and the parent keeps sending them back to their room with the same “keep trying.” The parent makes them keep **trying until** they get the correct answer. The result is that the child usually comes back with a big smile, a lot of confidence, and more importantly, the correct answer.

I am reminded of a man who came storming into the golf shop one day and demanded I give him two half-hour lessons in one week. It was important because he had to play golf with a client in a tournament the next week. When I told him we do not teach that way, that he had to complete at least the introductory 4 1/2-hour program, he became irritated. He then, very angrily, made it clear that he only needed two lessons. I responded by inquiring what he did for a living; he said, “I’m a CPA.” So I asked him, “Where can I learn to be a CPA in an hour?” He got my point: You need to understand that learning to play golf takes a greater commitment than one or two hours.

Although this program will help you improve quickly, it is not designed to be a quick fix. Clearly understand that when learning golf **there are no quick fixes**. People who improve at golf tend to have a **try until** attitude. I am not just talking about the accomplished professional, I am also including determined amateur. Establishing a personal training program through this guide and executing it, based on your individual physical strengths and weaknesses, provides the greatest probability for success.

### ***The Functional Golf Swing Book***

This booklet is your blueprint for building a functional golf swing. It will give you the complete *procedure* of what needs to take place to be successful; why these things must happen; and the correct sequential order. We try not to dwell on golf swing philosophies, the *subjective* part of the golf swing. This is what golf magazines write about and what golf professionals argue about, the individual experiences of the golf swing. Although various methods of execution may be discussed as examples, our goal is to maintain a procedural approach and encourage you to become more aware of how *your* body performs the procedure. *If you execute the procedure*

*naturally, the way your body allows it to happen, its easier to repeat.* Therefore, you will become a better golfer faster and maintain the improvement.

By following the simple principles and corresponding procedures, you will find yourself more in tune with how your body performs effectively. As you accept how you have to execute the swing procedure, you will become more committed to it. You will do less “tinkering” and “changing,” you will start to *repeat your swing the same way each time*. You will begin to notice improvement in consistency, score, and distance at levels you previously never believed possible.

But first, if you are going to improve, like all athletes, you must be willing to train. Successful athletes have a plan or strategy they train by; remember we call it a “blueprint.” However, to succeed there are two important qualities you must possess or develop, they are; self-discipline and self-control.

### **Self Discipline & Self-Control**

Our research tells us that lasting improvement can happen only through consistent practice and following a complete blueprint. You must be committed to your blueprint and have the self-discipline to follow it. I have added self-control *because it is the lack of it that keeps most people from reaching their goals*. Self-control is what disciplines you to execute your blueprint accurately each and every time. Without self-control, your work becomes more difficult.

# THE FUNCTIONAL GOLF SWING

## **BUILD A FUNCTIONAL GOLF SWING - “*The Total Immersion Technique*”**

Total Immersion is an exciting and successful method for teaching and training based on the “**Whole-Part-Whole**” concept of learning. Since 1981, I have been perfecting and have successfully employed this unique, no-nonsense method of instruction. The method exposes the student to the “whole” golf swing procedure, instead of bits and pieces without an orderly sequence.

First, through reading this guide or attending a live introductory seminar, students are “*immersed*” in the whole golf swing procedure. With a complete understanding of the **Whole** swing, students are able to understand the purpose and effect of each **Part** and its importance within the **Whole** swing. The significance of mastering each part, in correct order, becomes very clear to students before moving to the next. With this knowledge, students tend to more willing to devote more time to working through the troubling part rather than give up and go searching for a quick-fix.

Next, students learn the execution, or subjective part, of the golf swing. They learn that the correct motions and positions will produce the hit and direction that they want. Execution is controlled by what a student’s body individually will allow. For Example, those with a limited range of motion due to age, disability, body type, or flexibility learn how to get the most from that range and in many cases, discover ways to increase it. Some examples of this are discussed in the following chapters.

Lastly, this program is a Five-Step technique that is simple and easy to follow that promises fast results. At all times students know what they are trying to do with their swing, why, and the importance of maintaining the correct order. This plan comes complete with check points that are easily referenced to insure the execution is correct. Golfers enjoy knowing what causes each good or bad shot and how to control it.

### **A System For Everybody!**

This method is for men, women, juniors, seniors, amateurs, and professionals. It works because it is based on the individual. The principles for building a functional golf swing are designed to conform to the individual player, regardless of height, weight, age, or other physical differences.

### **Before You Continue-Please Note:**

Where applicable, the terms **FRONT** (the side of you closest to the hole) and **BACK** (the side farthest from the hole) are used in place of left and right in order to make the descriptions easier to understand by both left- and right-handed golfers. Also, when we say move forward, we mean toward the target; when we say step back, we mean away from the target.

## ***The First Step***

Step one in the ***Whole-Part-Whole*** learning technique is simple. Before the “hands-on” instruction begins, students must be presented with the complete procedure (blueprint). Remember, this is required because it is the information needed to establish the order of execution. This can be accomplished by one of the methods listed above, attending a live seminar, or reading this guide completely.

## ***Seminars***

Seminars are given at various locations and several times a month during the year. They are two hours in length and are given by Tom Braun. In these interactive seminars you are given the complete Functional Golf Swing program, your “blueprint.” You do not hit balls here... you do that in the follow up workshops. For dates and fees, phone us at 831-458-9119, or visit our web site at [www.functionalgolf.com](http://www.functionalgolf.com).

## ***The Book - The Functional Golf Swing***

If you cannot attend a seminar, you can read the *Functional Golf Swing* online, then pass a quiz to test your understanding. This book will become the “*Blueprint*” you will follow. It is a simple and easy reference guide that takes you step-by-step through the process of building a sound golf swing . . . *functionally*.

## The Setup Procedure

### “8 SECONDS TO A BETTER GAME”

#### PREPARING TO HIT A GOLF BALL - “*The Setup*”

The procedure for preparing to hit a golf ball is called the "setup" or "addressing the ball." We will use the term "setup" in our training.

It should make sense that if we can hold the club the same, point the body the same, position the body posture the same, then the body will learn to move the same thus producing the same shot or shape of shot. Only when you can consistently produce the same result through consistent setup and body movement can you become a consistent golfer. Consistently producing good shots means a lower score while consistent bad shots gives you a starting point to begin improving.

Think of it like a car that keeps having different problems, the mechanic does not know where to begin fixing it. On the other hand, if it continually has **the same** problem he knows exactly where to begin checking.

Our point here is, that like the car, you need to be producing a consistent result. Then and only then can you begin improving. If one shot is right, the next left, then too high, then too low, then you miss it altogether, you finish on the back foot, then on the front foot, then with both feet flat, where does one begin helping you? On the other hand, if you begin from the same setup positions, then learn to move the body fluidly and consistently the same and finish at the same point (on the front foot) every time you should begin producing a consistent result. Now you can be helped if the result you are getting is not what you want because the instructor has a starting point.

Let us not forget that the result may indeed be acceptable and now we can begin improving our accuracy and knowledge of distance. You may demand of yourself an even more precise setup and better controlled body movement, which results in more shots on the green and consistently closer to the pin. What will this do? PRODUCE LOWER SCORES!

#### ***Holding The Club (The Grip)***

At what point should holding the club (the Grip) come? What we know for sure is that changing someone's hand position as a first step seems to create "brain lock." Golfers simply do not adjust well to this change. Anything else they are working on is forgotten.

For the beginner, however, the first thing they will be taught is how to hold the golf club, so they must continue with this section. For someone who already plays, we prefer that you skip this section until you have read the section on balance. Use your current hand positions and direct your efforts toward gaining control of your body movements and alignment. Master the swing motion and positions until you begin creating **the same** shaped shot. Once you achieve this,

and if you do not like the shape of your shot, return to this section because changing how you hold the club can effect ball flight.

Our reluctance to change hand positions with experienced players as our first adjustment is because they do not have a value to place with the change. However, if they have control of their motion and positions and we make a change that produces the hit and direction they like, it will not be difficult to maintain the change. This is because they have experienced what the new hand positions will do for them and have a value to associate with that change.

The hand positions maintain control of the clubface during the swing and sets up the correct hinging of your wrist during the backswing and follow through. Hand positions are the only bond you have with the club. So it is important that they are functionally correct and, more importantly, *the same* each time.

*Remember, it is the correct motion and positions of the golf swing from the correct alignment and posture that produce consistent golf shots.* The hand positions alone will not guarantee good shots. Hand positions ensure the club is in the same position producing the same kind of shot. Adjusting the strength or weakness of these positions can help with direction.

*Players with experience you may skip forward and begin with “Visuals.” Novice golfers would benefit from starting with the following section “Holding the Club” and then continue.*

## **The Procedure For Holding the Club**

The most common mistake golfers make is that the hands work against each other. You can check this by noting the position of the **V**'s formed by the thumb and first finger of each hand while holding the club. What usually occurs is the front hand **V** points toward the front shoulder and the back hand **V** points toward the back shoulder; thus, the hands work against each other. Once the **V**'s point at about the same spot, somewhere between the back shoulder and back ear, the hands will begin to work together. (Be aware of your hand pressure--light and equal. Hand pressure will be reviewed at the end of this section.)

### **Front Hand Position**

With the clubhead on the ground, hold your front hand out with the thumb against the side of the palm. Try to keep the thumb solid against the side of the hand, from the base of the thumb down to the knuckle, at all times.

Next, point your fingers at the ground with golf club handle next to your palm. Make sure the grip goes diagonally across the first knuckle of your first finger and across the top of the little finger at the base of the palm. Once in this handshake-like position, the back of the front hand and your clubface should point in the same direction.

Now close your hand around the handle. The front thumb should rest on the backside of center of the grip, remembering to keep the thumb and the first finger-palm touching from the thumb knuckle up; thus forming the **V** in your front hand. Pay careful attention that the **V** created by the thumb and first finger points to a spot somewhere between the back eye and back shoulder.

### **Back Hand Position**

Follow the same procedure for preparing to hold the club as you did with the front hand. With the thumb against the side of the hand, begin your back hand placement.

Reach down and take hold of the club in your second and third fingers between the first and second knuckles. Next, close the hand around the handle and front hand. The front thumb should fit between the two pads of the back-hand palm. You will notice that when you wrap the rest of the fingers around the club you will be holding the club in the fingers and the palm on a diagonal. The back-hand's forefinger and thumb should also touch down to the joint of the thumb and the **V** formed by this should point to the same place that the front-hand **V** points.

When the rest of the fingers are wrapped around the club, the first three fingers are on the club. The placement of the little finger of the back hand determines which one of the *accepted* "grip" variations you use and with which you are comfortable.

### **Grip Variations (Accepted Hand Positions)**

There are several accepted hand position variations. Each is distinguished by what is done with the little finger of the back hand. Some of these are described below:

#### 1. Vardon Overlap

With the Vardon overlap, the little finger of the back hand lays on top of and between the first and second finger of the front hand. This is considered a power grip. It is the most widely accepted and used grip.

#### 2. Interlocking

We do not encourage the use of this grip because it forces the club too high into the back- hand palm. With the club in this position it requires too much pressure to keep it from slipping. Too much pressure causes tension and tightness which prevents the hands from working freely.

#### 3. Baseball

Also called the ten finger, the baseball grip is usually used by people and juniors with very small hands or when the club is too heavy. Let all the fingers of both hands hold the club. Make sure you keep the club diagonal in both hands with equal pressure and maintain the thumbs-to-palm (the **V** relationship) correct. Also recommended for golfers with arthritis.

#### 4. Over-Lock

This is the same as the overlap except for the fact that you place the back-hand little finger into the space between the first and second fingers of the front hand. The tip of the back- hand little finger actually rests on the grip. This was made famous by the Australian golfer Greg Norman.

Regardless of what you do with your back-hand little finger, you must remember to hold the club more towards the fingers than the palm. A palm grip creates too much tension because it takes too much pressure to maintain control of the club. With the club held in combination with the fingers and palm you can maintain a light but secure grip. Remember, tension and over-control are two of the biggest killers of a productive golf swing.

## **Hand Pressure**

It is important for you to realize that once you can hold the club the same each time, you must work to keep the same hand pressure. The hand pressure should be consistent throughout, light but firm not tight (like holding a broom before you begin sweeping). Remember, the hand pressure will increase automatically as needed during the swing.

## ***VISUALS - "The Window To The Brain"***

What do you think controls the golf swing? Your eyes, or "visuals" as we will refer to them. It's quite simple; Golf is a target-oriented game. The eyes see the target; they serve as the window to the brain. The eyes tell the brain where the target is; the brain in return tells the muscles how to react so they can swing the object in the hands (the club) through the object on the ground (ball) toward the target. However, if this swing path is across the ***"Position for Maximum Power"*** (a natural occurrence explained in detail later) the results will, in most cases, be a mishit shot with poor direction.

Thus, an important part of your training will be to program and train your visuals. Training the visuals must be done through correct alignment and setup positions during practice periods. If the body is not properly aligned and positioned it becomes impossible to train one's visuals correctly and to produce consistent results.

## ***ALIGNMENT - "The most difficult thing you will ever have to learn!"***

To ensure effective physical and mental experiences while practicing, you must always correctly position the body and point it *the same* way every time you prepare to hit a golf ball. Remember, you have learned that if you position the body *the same*, you can train the muscles to react *the same*; thus, producing *the same* shot or shape of shot. The key words here are ***the same!***

To make it easy for you to follow our "the same" rule, in this training system we will begin from a ***"Parallel"*** alignment position, like railroad tracks. Your body and stance are on one rail (*Alignment Line*) and the ball and clubhead on the other (*Target Line*). Beginning from parallel is universally accepted as correct and is the most important factor when training the eyes.

Why do we play from parallel? First, you can always go back and find a parallel position. Second, as you will see a little later, it is essential to create the right angle with the body and front arm so crucial to the "Position for Maximum Power." Proper alignment is so important that most

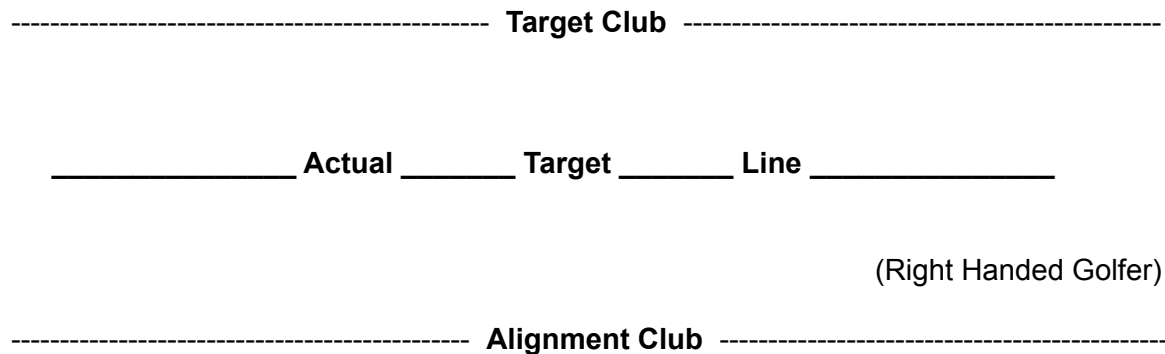
of the time it alone sets up a good or bad swing. Some swing flaws that can be traced to incorrect alignment include:

- Lateral sliding
- Coming "over the top"
- Poor rotation
- Poor weight transfer
- Head movement
- Improper release
- Loss of power
- Incorrect leg action
- Topping
- Hooking & Slicing

*"Let there be no misunderstanding, ALIGNMENT is the most difficult thing you will ever **have to learn to do in golf.**" Rick Walker*

### **FINDING PARALLEL "Why is this so difficult?"**

Starting out, lay one club on the ground, called the **Target Club**. Lay a second club, called the **Alignment Club**, about two to two-and-a-half feet exactly parallel and to the inside of your Target club (like railroad tracks). Next, place a golf ball a few inches inside the Target club. Picture an imaginary line going through your ball to your target and running parallel to both your Target and Alignment clubs. This is your **Actual Target Line** and should show you your exact target.



Although there are a few very good golfers who play from an **Open** stance and even fewer who use a **Closed** stance, to be successful they must play and hit hundreds of golf balls every day. Our method assumes that people have a life full of responsibilities, obligations, and other interests that prevents playing and practicing eight hours a day seven days a week. Therefore, they must train smarter by using a blueprint they can follow every time the opportunity to practice presents itself. One cannot afford to be searching or guessing during these valuable practice periods.

Think of this: if you use a closed or open stance and begin hitting the ball badly, you will try to remember. . . . "How closed/open was I when I hit good shots? How do I find that position now that I am hitting bad shots?" This is a difficult thing to work out if you do not have the hours available to hit balls on the range guessing and tinkering. But this is never a problem when your swing foundation is built on the fact that every full swing begins by setting up the body parallel to the target line. This includes your feet, knees, hips, and shoulders. *You can always go back and find parallel!*

*"The reason I believe this is so difficult to master is because railroad tracks look like they come together as they go away from you. In golf you should try to imagine just the opposite. The tracks get wider apart as they go away from you." Rick Walker*

### **Creating The Stance - "Your correct ball, width of stance, and foot positions."**

Consistent ball position and width of stance is very important, so you must discipline yourself to make sure it is correct **each time** you prepare to hit a ball. It is also important that you realize that ball position, width of stance, and foot positions go together. They are completed at the same time.

However, before we go any further, it will help if you understand *"where the center of the golf swing is."* Although this seems to be a surprise to most people, the center of the swing is the front armpit. If you thought the center of the swing was the center of the chest between the feet (as I was taught as a youngster), this is incorrect. This is the center of balance, your *center line*.

Remember when you were a kid and you tied a string to a pencil, then, while holding the string down with your finger you drew a circle. Where was the center of the circle? Where you held the string with your finger, right! Take a golf club in your front hand and swing it in a circle, where is it swinging from? The front arm pit! Therefore, the bottom of the swing arc (apex of the swing) is directly below this point, usually 2" to 4" inches inside the front heel. This will be important to remember when discussing the "Position for Maximum Power" later.

With this method we will be using two ball positions. One with the short irons and one with the long irons and fairway woods. (Due to the unique problems created by the driver, we will discuss it later.) For our purposes, we will begin our training program with the short irons and learn about the rest of the clubs after we have gained control of our swing.

#### ***Ball Position - "The Short Irons" (SW - 7 Iron)***

The ball position for the short irons is the *center of the stance, between the heels*. With short irons we like to catch the ball with a slight downward blow, called "trapping," which is important for control and creating backspin. By moving the ball position to the center of the stance, behind the center of the swing, we create the "trapping" effect (downward blow with the hands ahead). The ball is trapped between the clubface and the ground and rolls up the clubface producing the desired height while at the same time creating the spin associated with short clubs. This spin assists with stopping the ball more quickly on the green and in some cases causing the ball to spin back toward the player.

The correct width of stance, ball position, and foot placement procedure is:

*Width of Stance:* Your check point is to position the feet about shoulder width apart. Visualize water dripping off your shoulders, this is called the “Drip Line.” You want the water to drip onto your shoes somewhere between the laces and the outside edge of both shoes.

The best way to do this is to place the feet together and position the ball between them with the toes against the *alignment club*. Take equal steps forward and back; first toward the target until the front foot is under your front shoulder; then step back along the alignment club (away from the target) until the back foot is under the back shoulder. These equal steps create a consistent foundation to begin building your swing. Remember to check that your shoulders are between the laces and outside edge of your shoes.

*Perfect Ball Position:* Beginning with the ball between our feet and taking equal steps to the shoulders (along the *alignment line*), we have guaranteed ourselves that the ball position is in the middle of the stance, exactly between the heels. When we check it, we also see that the ball is directly at the bottom of our *center line*, all easy to reference and maintain. Instead of guessing about the ball position, it can be guaranteed every time.

*Foot Positions:* Check that the front foot is turned out slightly and the back foot almost perpendicular. Foot positions are important because anytime you can do something during the setup that enhances swing performance you should take advantage of it. This is one of those opportunities. Let me explain:

During the backswing, the back toe is perpendicular or turned out just slightly (no more than one to two inches) in relation to the target line. Since we are not rotating back as far as we will be rotating forward and through during the forward swing, we want the back foot in this position. The purpose is to help hold the back leg knee in its athletic (flexed) position during the loading of the swing. It is necessary to create this restriction when “coiling” or “loading up” the lower body in preparation for the forward swing. The worst thing a golfer can do is “lose the legs” during the backswing. It is on the backswing that most golfers lose their legs by letting the back leg “break out” or back foot “roll.” Holding the back foot in this position with the pressure toward the inside of the foot and fairly equal from toe to heel helps to eliminate these problems.

The front foot is always turned out further because you will rotate further around it with more force to complete the finish position (like throwing a ball). With the forward swing, you rotate your weight forward and turn through until you finish with the weight on the front foot and toward the heel. This extra freedom created by turning the front foot out further is needed to allow your hips to rotate completely during the forward swing.

For many golfers it is difficult to maintain this front foot position at address. Thirty years of student feedback has established the fact that with the front toe turned out the alignment line across the toes appears to point well to the left (right-handed golfers) of the target line, appearing to be an “open” stance. This seems to be uncomfortable at first, but do not let it confuse you, your heels are still parallel to the target line. This is correct so do not let untrained visuals cause you to change.

Remember, this is a guide, and there are allowable swing tolerances. It is perfectly acceptable to bring the toe of the front foot back up to the *alignment line*, but no further. The toes will be

parallel; it will appear that you are in a parallel stance, however, the heels tell us that it is a slightly closed stance.

Keep in mind our earlier statement that anything you can do during setup that enhances swing performance and consistency should be done. Attention to foot placement at address will promote better and more consistent back and forward swing motions and positions.

The reason this width of stance, ball position, and foot position procedure works for everyone is because the width of the stance will vary from person to person depending on shoulder width. It fits each golfer individually depending on their body shape and size. Moreover, this procedure sets everyone in a balanced stance with perfect ball and foot positions.

### ***Posture - "Power, Consistency, and Control"***

How many times have you been told, or heard someone else being told, that their head moved either up or down? What usually follows is a supreme effort to keep the head down, creating other swing problems such as hitting a fat, thin, topped, or whiffed shot. The result, in some cases, are injuries to the back, wrist, and neck.

Head movement up or down is usually the result of poor posture at setup. If there is too much body tilt at setup the head will move up during the backswing then down during the forward swing. Not enough body tilt will cause the head to move down on the backswing then back up on the forward swing. This kind of movement during a swing negatively effects your balance and ability to rotate do to the spine angle changes. The up and down head movement is the signal that your posture may be off. Correct posture creates good balance and makes it easy to rotate fully and freely around the spine while maintaining consistent swing motion and positions.

For many years golf instructors told students to stand erect with their legs straight, then bend forward at the waist like bending over a table, then flex the knees. This gives the appearance of correct posture; however, it places an enormous amount of pressure on the lower back. Over the years we have learned to flex the legs first then tilt from the hips not the waist. The results have been the elimination of lower back strain during setup.

What we like to see is, with the stance about shoulder width and standing erect, hold your arms straight out and form a 90 degree angle with your arms, hands, and club. First, *flex the legs down slightly*, then *tilt forward from the hips* (not the waist) and let the clubhead fall to the ground. At this point, your arms will hang down with the hands underneath the shoulders. The weight should be equal on the feet from toe to heel and slightly to the inside. This is the classic "athletic" position; it is an "elastic" position, not tense and not too relaxed.

This "athletic" posture is similar to a baseball batter ready to hit a pitch, a quarterback taking the snap from center, a basketball player in a defensive-ready position, a tennis player set to receive a serve. In all cases the body is "athletic," balanced and ready to move. With golf, you simply let the arms hang down.

Good posture produces: *A slight flex in the knees, but not a forced flex; the legs are in position to accept and generate motion. The upper body tilts slightly forward from the hips, but not a forced tilt. The arms hang down underneath the shoulders comfortably. The head remains in*

*the center of the stance between the heels.* Remember, it is an "athletic" position that allows your body the fullest range of motion with the least amount of movement laterally or up and down while maintaining complete balance.

### ***How To Maintain Perfect Posture and A Consistent Swing Plane!***

Once in the "athletic" posture, the perfect check point is to look in a mirror from a side view. You will see that with the legs flexed and the trunk of the body tilted forward while keeping the shoulders parallel to the target line, the front-hand ring finger is directly below the front shoulder socket. The front arm hangs almost straight down, and there is a slight break at the wrists. You will also notice from this view that the shaft angle of the golf club in your hands is almost at a right angle with your spine tilt. (This is important because it is another of the key elements in the "Position for Maximum Power.") With the possible exception of the driver this is the correct posture with every club.

With the posture and arm-hang procedure completed you now have a checkpoint to reference which makes it easy to maintain perfect posture. Make a mental note of how far your front hand is from your front leg once you are in correct posture (or use your back hand to measure in fingers or palms your exact hand-to-leg distance). This hand-to-leg distance is your checkpoint before every swing and you want to maintain it with every club. The distance you stand from the ball is then determined by the length of the golf club you are using. Remember, an effective way to retain correct posture with every club is to use the leg-to-hand distance as a check point.

With your body correctly positioned, you have established the path or plane of movement the body will take. Thus you have established your individual swing plane. It is easy to see that different body builds (long legs, short trunk, equal legs to trunk, etc.) will create more or less distance between the leg-to-hand relationship and thus produce a "flatter" or more "upright" swing plane. The important thing here is to understand that "swing plane" is established at address and should not be altered during the swing.

### ***Front View . . . Arm & Shoulder Positions***

At this point you should be comfortable with the check points for proper alignment, stance, posture, and side perspective of the arm hang. The following are the checkpoints for arm and shoulder positions from a front view:

1. Facing the golfer, the front arm and club form the long side of the letter **Y**. The back arm, when holding the club, forms the short side of the letter **Y** (for right-handed golfers). Further checkpoints show that the butt of the club points to the front hip socket, the front hand grip lines up with the inner thigh of the front leg, and the front hand hangs under the front arm pit.
2. When the shoulders are parallel to the target line they will tilt from front to back. This is due to the fact that the back hand is lower than the front while holding the club. If the shoulders do not tilt from front to back you can bet that they are not parallel to your target line. Square or "flat" shoulders usually means "open" shoulders (pointing left of the target for right handed golfers) which will make it difficult to begin the

backswing correctly. So, if you do not see the letter **Y** formed by the arms and shoulder tilt from front to back . . . check the alignment of the shoulders.

### ***HEAD POSITION - "Keep Your Head Down Is A Myth"!***

It is vital that you know and practice the functions and responsibilities of the head. Follow these four simple rules:

1. The head ALWAYS stays in the center of the body, between the feet (your center line). This is a must for good balance.
2. When in correct setup position; to look at the target, let the head rotate around the spine from looking at the ball, to looking at the target, and back to looking at the ball (eyes following along the target line). No spine angle changes should occur during this process.
3. With the head in the center of the chest it will be very easy for you to see the ball positions previously outlined. The head over the ball with the short irons and slightly behind the ball with the medium, long irons, fairway woods, and driver (because the ball is moved forward in the stance). Head position corresponds to ball position and width of stance, it remains centered between your feet.
4. During the swing the head is kept as steady as possible. However, on the forward swing as the back shoulder hits the chin, the head rotates and follows the ball on its flight. The head does not straighten up completely; the correct finish has your eyes at a slight vertical angle to the ground while facing the target. You still have a slight "spine tilt."

**Note:** You do not keep the head down, this terminology was used long ago and is used today by unqualified people in an effort to make golfers maintain body tilt throughout the swing. Keeping the head down restricts the release of your back side, and the back side is your power. The head, as outlined in the four simple steps above, has its own plane on which to rotate. Do not forget that a good way to check your body tilt is to see that your eyes are slightly vertical at the finish and not parallel to the ground.

**A Test:** An easy way to prove head release and disprove "keep the head down" is to try the following activity. Imagine standing on the pitchers mound at your local baseball field. Depending on whether you are right or left handed we want you facing either third base (right handed) or first base (left handed), the look at second base. While looking at second base, try to throw a ball towards home plate. You cannot do it unless you let the head rotate towards home plate, thus letting the back side of the body rotate through giving you access to your power. In a golf swing not only does keeping the head down restrict ability to rotate like our example, it causes several other famous mistakes. Learn how to "*release*" the head properly.

## ***Training The Visuals***

Now that you have completed the setup procedure correctly, training your visuals (your eyes) is the next step. If this is not incorporated into your training during practice periods your success on the course will not keep pace with your improvement at the driving range.

If you have complete the setup procedure correctly, you should know the exact location of your target. It is here you make note of where the target is in relation to your front shoulder and begin training your visuals (eyes). You must train yourself to become comfortable with where you now see the target. Later, when you are on the golf course, you will see just how important this part of your training is.

If the visuals are not trained during practice sessions, you will not be able to maintain correct alignment on the golf course. The result is that no matter how much practice or how many lessons you take, you will never play much better. Train your visuals during practice periods until you can take it to the golf course. Remember, if your eyes give bad information to the brain, the brain gives bad information to the muscles then the muscles create bad swings, thus producing bad shots.

In 28 years of improving golfer's swings, we have found that when correct alignment is accomplished, with few exceptions, all the golfers we tested had the sensation that the intended target was off to the away side of their front shoulder (out to the right for a right-handed golfer). This odd sensation is due to the fact that when most golfers begin playing they tend to point their body and front shoulder at the target. When this happens you are standing on the line you want the ball to travel with the clubface pointing well to the away side (right for right-handed golfers). Thus, you will have to swing the clubhead across your body if you are going to swing it through the ball and toward the target. To make this happen, you will pull the front arm across the body causing it to breakdown, the back shoulder to come "over the top," and restricting leg action. Some of the most notable results caused by this kind of motion includes head movement up or down, swaying, topped shots, slicing, poor hand action, and most notably sore backs.

***An Important Reminder:*** When training the eyes, remember our procedure, look at the target by simply rotating the head from the ball, to the target, and back to the ball. Do not straighten up or change your body posture.

With this understanding of the importance of the correct setup, alignment, and training the visuals there should be a noticeable improvement almost immediately. First, however, you must make all of this a part of your routine.

### ***Your Setup Routine - "8 Seconds To Success"***

Eventually you will have to take your ***Target*** and ***Alignment*** clubs away and learn to setup and point the body correctly on the golf course. The following is the routine we suggest you follow in order to guarantee the correct alignment and setup positions.

## 1. Grip

### Front hand

Club shaft diagonally across the hand through the first knuckle of the first finger and the base of the palm just above the little finger.

### Back hand

Take hold of the club first with the second and third fingers of the back hand. Place the grip in the fingers at the middle knuckle then close the hand over the front hand. The front-hand thumb should fit between the two pads of the back-hand palm. With the fingers closed around the grip, you should notice pressure between the first finger and thumb of the back hand.

The little finger of the back hand should be one of the following:

Overlapping the first finger of the front hand (Vardon)

On the shaft, known as a ten finger grip

Over-locking, the Greg Norman grip

The **V**'s of both hand should point in the same direction (working together).

Grip should have light and equal pressure with both hands

## 2. From behind the ball:

Using your golf club shaft, plumb a straight line from the ball to your target.

Pick a spot from 3 inches to 3 feet in front of your ball and on the target line.

Use the spot to create a visual target line from the ball to the pin. Remember that this is your **TARGET** line, you will use this when positioning the body during "setup" on the corresponding parallel **ALIGNMENT** line. ***Always play from parallel!***

## 3. Stance (Determined by the club selected)

Width

Ball Position

Foot positions

## 4. Body Posture

Leg Flex

Body Tilt

An Athletic position

## 5. Arm Hang & Shoulder Tilt

Front hand ring finger below the front shoulder socket

When the front hand is below the front ball socket note how far it is from the front leg.

Measure it with your back hand. Maintain your leg-to-hand distance with all clubs.

Arms form the **Y** (for right-handed golfers)

Remember, the back hand is lower than the front; so to keep the shoulders parallel to the target line. The shoulders must tilt from front to back.

## 6. Head Position

Center of body, between the heels

Chin slightly up like looking out the bottom of your sunglasses

Head rotates from ball to target back to the ball when looking at your target.

In the beginning this will take about 16 seconds, however, eventually everyone gets it down to around 8 seconds. **8 Seconds ! That's it!** Isn't a good shot worth 8 seconds?

### **Tolerances “*For your individual success*”**

In just about everything we do there are tolerances. The ability to fluctuate from a recommended standard. We have been specific about where to place the body during setup, order of motion, and positions. However, you will notice that we refer to “as close as possible,” “between,” “about,” “can be,” and “almost”; these are non-specific. These terms should imply to you that there are allowable tolerances or fluctuations.

Our purpose is to give you an easily-referenced and repeatable starting point. Different body types, flexibility, and size determine how much one varies the positions. However, ***this is a warning***: You should not exceed the boundaries we have established. Only if you consider yourself an “extreme” case should you exceed the positions and then only with the supervision of a qualified golf instructor.

In every case, the procedure we have presented and the order of motion and positions should be maintained to the best of your ability. A “Functional Golf Swing” is one that has found a way to do this.

## UNDERSTANDING THE POSITION FOR MAXIMUM POWER

### THE POSITION FOR MAXIMUM POWER IS NATURAL

Up to this point we have explained the procedure and positions of the setup. In our procedure we pointed out three key positions and told you they were important to the "Position for Maximum Power." They were :

1. A parallel stance to the target line.
2. Front hand below the front arm pit (forming the letter Y for right-handers)
3. The shaft of the club is almost at a right angle to your spine tilt when in proper posture, stance, and arm hang,

This is the "*Position For Maximum Power.*" It is nothing more than a series of motions and positions that the body knows how to perform naturally. Everyone has used this at one time or another while working or playing. Once you can associate how you have used it during other activities and apply that to your golf swing you will find it easier to perform consistently.

### A Convincing Experiment

For years I have taken golfers of all abilities and had them try to bury an ax head in the side of a tree as deep as they could. At certain facilities we used baseball bats to hit telephone poles, but no matter which one we used, the assignment was always the same, to swing the object in the hands at a target and hit it.

Our only instruction was to bury the ax head as deep as they could into the tree. We did not care how far up from the ground the tree was struck. However, if they should be lucky enough to fell the tree with one blow we wanted it to fall on a straight line that had been established on the ground. The purpose for establishing a line on the ground was to create a strike point on the tree.

What we discovered was:

1. Everyone positioned the body and feet parallel to the line we established on the ground. They naturally created a right angle with their feet and front arm to the object they were about to hit. Physics tell us that it is necessary to produce a right angle when establishing the apex of a swing.
2. Next, everyone set the front edge of the tree opposite the front armpit. This is the center of the swing, the point on the body where the object in the hands connects. Physics again confirms that this is the apex of the swing, the point at which the ax head is moving the fastest. Isn't it interesting that the body knew to set it there naturally.
3. Lastly, we found that everyone struck the tree at a point off the ground that placed the ax handle at about a right angle to the spine angle. Once again, the laws of physics

state that a swinging object swings fastest and most consistently when it is at a right angle to its axis. The body knows instinctively how to do this and does it successfully without thinking.

My Conclusions:

1. If we used an "open" stance, the power would not have reached maximum speed (the apex) before striking the tree; thus, a scraping or scratching-type blow would be produced.
2. Conversely, if we used a "closed" stance, the point at which we strike the tree would be past the apex of the swing; thus, the swing speed would be dissipating (most golfers). Additionally, we would have to break down our front arm to hit our strike point on the tree (the cause of topping and slicing).

All of these things are not conducive to an effective golf swing. The amazing thing was that students who found a way to repeat the "*Position For Maximum Power*" automatically corrected many other faults. In other words, their swings self-corrected by simply learning to master this one position.

# THE FULL SWING

## THREE PARTS TO THE FULL SWING

Now that you can setup and aim correctly with the correct body positions, you can begin learning the correct swing progression. There are three parts to the golf swing:

1. The "Backswing" or "load"
2. The "Forward swing" or "unload"
3. The "Finish" which controls direction

## THE BACKSWING (*Load*)

Just as a gun or bow-and-arrow needs to be loaded before being shot in a forward direction, the golf swing must also be loaded in order to create the force necessary to move in a forward direction. This is called the "Backswing" or "Load."

If you keep up with all of the major golf magazines, by now you must think there are so many different ways to make the backswing how can you ever get it right. In the same month, the three major golf publications had feature stories with three different methods for making the backswing. Seve Ballesteros told you to start the backswing with the clubhead and hands. Jack Nicklaus wanted you to push the club away and Greg Norman said to turn the shoulder. Who is correct?

What the "authors" of these magazine articles were telling you was how **they** experience making the correct backswing. In other words, when they were in the accepted correct positions, while initiating the correct sequential order of the backswing, this is how they explained their experience. The common denominators were that the shoulder turned around the spine underneath the chin to the center of the chest (about 90 degrees), which turned the hips approximately half as far. So, they all were correct!

The simple truth is that confusion and poor alignment are what commonly prevent a good backswing. Just remember, like throwing a ball, the upper body (hands, arms, shoulders, and torso) loads up the middle and lower body (legs) so the lower body can initiate the forward movement. Your body knows how to do this naturally, so let it. Just make a note of how it happens so you can repeat it.

To make the correct backswing, all you have to do is turn the front shoulder until it is directly under your chin at the center of your chest (*center line*). As you rotate your upper body into this position you must maintain flex in both of your legs and especially your back leg flex position. This places your back facing the target (at a 90 degree angle). You will now notice that the hips have rotated about half of the distance your shoulders have turned. This is the correct sequential order and causes your weight to coil, and rotate to your back foot. Sometimes this is referred to as the pivot, coil, or load. You will notice the front knee moves toward the back knee and points behind the ball. The front heel may come off the ground, depending on your body type and flexibility.

At the same time your front shoulder reaches the center of the body, the arms will swing up and the club will rest on the front thumb, which places the shaft above the back shoulder and the clubhead pointing parallel to the side of the target. The back arm will fold at the elbow. You will feel pressure on the front thumb as the front wrist hinges forming a 90-degree angle with the shaft and arm. This happens automatically. It is from here that much of your power will come. This is referred to as “wrist cock” or “loading the hands.”

I would not be too concerned with swing plane at this point because your swing plane will be determined by your body posture and arm hang at address. People who work on swing plane are, in most cases, out of position to begin with and are trying to manipulate the club into the correct position during the swing. If you have to manipulate your swing plane you can bet your setup is incorrect and the chances of improving your consistency will be difficult, if not impossible.

### ***The Procedure***

As the shoulders turn to create the backswing (coiling which builds torque on your flexed back leg like a discus thrower), the clubhead begins to travel along the target line and then slightly to the inside as the torso rotates. At the same time, the hands, which you remember are underneath the shoulders, travel a path parallel to the clubhead and underneath the shoulders. When the hands are just below waist high the front arm and club shaft relationship should be parallel to the target line, pointing down the backside of the alignment line. At this point, the front-hand thumb is on top of the club shaft. The toe of the club is toward the sky with the clubface appearing to be slightly shut (angled toward the target line). As the shoulders continue the load, the wrists automatically cock (hinge) as the club comes to rest on the front thumb.

Believe it or not, this is just how simple the backswing is. This is the procedure, non-subjective. The subjective part, how individuals experience accomplishing the procedure, is what golf magazine articles are written about. It is all right for people to have different experiences of the same procedure. This is easily explained because there are so many different body types, strength and flexibility variations, and more notably how people learn, their neuro-linguistic programming.

To build a functional golf swing you must be committed to the concept of finding a way to execute the procedure correctly. When the procedure is executed correctly we want you to make note of how you experienced making it happen so you can make it happen again. With this knowledge and easily referenced check points, you should be able to repeat it perfectly every time.

The backswing can be accomplished in different ways. The key is to find out how your body lets you get into the correct positions. When it does, make note of it. The following are some examples of the different ways students have describe how they created the correct positions. Although each golfer was in the same backswing position how they got there and what they experienced were completely different. Some examples that may be of interest:

1. *Start the backswing by turning the front shoulder to the center of the chest, let the arms swing up and the rest of the body will rotate to the proper positions. Turning*

the front shoulder to start the swing is probably the most used, accepted, and taught method.

2. *Begin the backswing by swinging the clubhead back with the hands and arms until the shoulder is pulled under the chin and the lower body follows to the correct 45-degree hip turn.* Seve Ballesteros and Johnny Miller do it this way.
3. A perfect image is to “*coil like a discus thrower.*” You can really see this in the new modern player more than ever. This is the result of an emphasis on holding both legs flexed and coiling with the upper body around the back leg. Once in this position the legs can do nothing but initiate the forward swing.
4. A successful image for people with a limited range of motion or stiffness who have trouble rotating around the spine is, *swing like a door.* Turn the front shoulder, hip, and knee simultaneously (like the edge of a door). Many older golfers and people with bad backs complete the correct positions using this method.

The point is when golfers accomplish the correct backswing procedure, they described the experience differently, but it is the same procedure. What we want our students to do is to make note of how their body accomplished the correct procedure once they have performed it . . . and do it again.

### ***Why Is Learning Golf So Confusing?***

Let me take a minute here to help you understand why learning how to play golf can be so confusing. It is because people do not have the same primary or even secondary learning programming. So basically, we learn the same thing differently. Sound confusing? It really is simple, and you will improve more quickly once you know your primary and secondary learning conditions.

What we are referring to is Neuro-Linguistic Programming; how you learn. The concept of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) was developed by John Grinder and Richard Bandler at the University of California Santa Cruz for therapeutic communication; however, it has gained world-wide popularity in many other fields. You will find NLP used in education, business, and law; if you have seen the internationally famous motivational speaker Anthony Robbins on television infomercials, you have been exposed to NLP.

We believe NLP is so interesting and productive to golf training that the topic could fill hundreds of pages in this guide. If you would like more in-depth information we recommend “Applications of Neuro-Linguistic Programming” by Robert Dilts, Meta Publications, 1983, or any book on the subject by John Grinder and Richard Bandler.

### ***What Is NLP?***

NLP, like the martial arts, is a discipline. It was designed to answer questions such as  
“How, specifically, do individuals consistently and successfully achieve their desired outcomes?”

According to Dilts et al. (1980): *Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a model of communication that is presently used internationally. Focusing on thought process, NLP has found patterns that influence people's verbal and non-verbal behavior. By identifying and using these patterns, NLP practitioners can improve the quality and effectiveness of their communication.*

*The name Neuro-Linguistic Programming stands for what we maintain to be the basic process used by all human beings to encode, transfer, guide, and modify behavior—*

*“Neuro” (derived from the Greek “neuron” for nerve) stands for the fundamental tenet that all behavior is the result of neurological process. “Linguistic” (derived from the Latin “lingua” for language) indicates that neural processes are represented, ordered and sequenced into models and strategies through language and communication systems. “Programming” refers to the process of organizing the components of a system (sensory representations in this case) to achieve specific outcomes.”*

There are five representational systems we use. They are Auditory (Hearing), Visual (Sight), Kinesthetic (Body Sensations-Feel), and Olfactory/Gustatory (Smell/Taste). Although there are five, we are only going to use the main three systems. They are: Visual (sight), Kinesthetic (feel), and Auditory (sound). People learn using all three but usually have one or two more developed than the others. It has been determined that 60% of the population is primarily Visual, 20% primarily Kinesthetic, and 20% primarily Auditory. When you consider that we use one, two, or all three of these in our processing of information, with any possible combination of the three, it is easy to understand how explaining and comprehending a golf swing can be confusing.

So how will all of this help your golf? With a working knowledge of NLP an instructor becomes a better communicator and a better communicator produces faster and better results. Additionally, knowing how students process information provides the instructor an insight as to why the student has trouble with a particular part or procedure of the golf swing. Sometimes a student's primary learning system, such as Kinesthetic (feel), will cause an over magnification of the intended outcome due to the fact that feel will change in a very short period of time. Thus the student has the experience of going back-and-forth over the same point. This is very discouraging and is a common reason golfers “give up.”

Having experience with NLP an instructor can communicate to the student that instead of being focused on the *feel* first, focus on the correct position first and go with the resulting feel. However, the student should be aware that by swinging to position first, the *feel* may change several times during a round of golf. This is because once the body does something the same for an extended period of time it no longer seems foreign, therefore, by trying to re-establish that original feel one has the tendency to over-do the desired procedure. Simply put, they have gone too far.

The following are some golf examples of the three neuro-linguistic learning systems. Which one are you?

1. Visual (sight); Do you like to see an example of what the instructor wants you to do? Example, on the backswing the image or picture of coiling like a discus thrower or “turn like a door.” This type of golfer “pictures” the outcome they want. You will hear a visual person say “I like the flight of that shot.” “I see what you’re trying to get me to do.” They like to first see the outcome.
2. Kinesthetic (feel); Do you like to first do it or have the instructor move your body through the desired outcome? Example, on the backswing would be; swing the club head back and the body will follow to the correct positions. Feel players like to feel what to do in the swing. After a good shot, you will usually hear a feel player say something like, “That felt great.” “I could feel the club at the top.” “It doesn’t feel right!” “I don’t feel you understand my problem.”
3. Auditory (sound, although with golf I find these people take a “mechanical” approach); Do you like things explained first then try it? Again and example for the backswing would be; turn the front shoulder to the center of the chest forming the 90 degree angle. Auditory golfers tend to relate to simple mechanical positions and order of motion. Some of the greatest players in the game show tendencies of having primary auditory conditioning. Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson, Johnny Miller, and Nick Faldo tend to show strong signs of being primary auditory. “I hear what you’re saying.” “This position explains why I’ve been having this problem.” “If I can just get the club from here to there.” These are auditory responses.

If you are Visual-Auditory and someone is giving you a lesson using Kinesthetic examples there is a good chance it is not going to work for you. Why? Because you are not working under the same learning system. We have found through our accelerated learning programs that it is advantageous to know each student’s representational system so we can communicate better with them. More importantly, we have found that knowing how a student learns helps us teach them how to effectively control the individual weaknesses each learning system creates.

Everyone has and learns through these three “representational systems.” Some have been developed more than the rest. Therefore, you will use one or two of these modes to model how you want to execute the golf swing. When you learn to use these systems within your golf training program, the speed with which you improve, along with your level of improvement, will surprise you.

As you can see, that the actual action of the backswing is an individual experience. Turning to the correct position can be accomplished with many different explanations, some of which have been the subject of golf magazine articles. How you get to the correct backswing position will be determined and explained by what your body will allow and through your Neuro-Linguistic impressions (visual, kinesthetic, or auditory) of it.

Through their personal experiences golfers come up with different explanations on ways to execute the backswing procedure. The only constant is the final load position, which is almost the same for everyone.

### ***Review Of Our Procedure***

In all cases, the shoulder should turn to the center of the chest, no more no less. This will put you in the following positions with the various ball positions:

1. With the short irons, the correct turn will give you the sensation that the front shoulder has stopped directly over the ball and in the center of the chest. Remember this is because the ball is in the center of the stance between the heels.
2. With the medium and long irons and fairway woods, when you turn to the center of your chest you see the front shoulder move slightly behind the ball. This is a different experience because you have moved the ball to a position forward in the stance and underneath the armpit (center of the swing). Remember, the head is still in the center of the stance, therefore, behind the ball.

### **THE FORWARD SWING (*Unload*)**

Once you have coiled and loaded on your back leg, you are ready to unload by initiating the forward swing. Just the thought of making the forward swing has the middle and lower body starting the process because it is the natural sequential order for the body to follow when creating such an act. Like throwing or hitting a ball.

To make the forward swing, follow this sequence. From the top of your back-swing the front heel returns to the ground. Rotate the middle and lower body, keeping the hips moving parallel to the ground, until the stomach reaches a point that faces down the *alignment line*. When you make the forward swing the weight moves to your front foot and the back knee moves toward the front knee. When completed, you will notice that the front leg has ***posted up*** (straightened) and the weight is on the front foot; the knees and thighs are touching (a check point) and the back foot is straight up on the big toe.

Now, while holding your finish, look back at your leg positions and notice that with the knees and thighs touching, the bend from the back leg knee to the foot creates the "backside bottom" of the letter "***K***", for right-handed players (a checkpoint). For left-handed players, the legs will look exactly like the bottom of the letter "***K***". It is another check point you need to remember because it tells you that you have executed the forward swing correctly. From this point on we will refer to this lower body finish position as the "***K***" position.

### **The "***K***" Position - "*It Eliminates Fat Shots!*"**

The importance of the "***K***" position is that it shows us that we have rotated the body completely and properly. This movement is what levels off the swing arc and helps insure the weight is on the front foot at impact thus eliminating the "Fat" shot (hitting the turf before the ball). If you have

ever wondered what causes the "Fat" shot, now you have the answer. Weight on the back foot at impact caused by improper or incomplete rotation of the middle body and legs during the downswing thus allowing the upper body to pass the lower body too soon.

The "**K**" position is your check point to insure complete rotation of the hips, the correct sequential order of motion and weight transfer. Additionally it causes the arms, hands, and clubhead to swing forward and through on the correct path and at the proper time.

At the finish, the back heel should never finish further over than perpendicular or directly above the back big toe. You may finish directly on top of the back big toe or ever so slightly on the inside of it, but never on the outside toward the target line. Finishing outside toward the target line means you have either over rotated or were out of the correct sequential order.

Although we become repetitive here, it is because of the importance of these positions and sequential order. On the forward swing, make sure to turn the back hip forward until both hips are in line with each other and you are facing parallel left of the target (right-handed golfers).

### **Your Forward Swing Checkpoints Are - Finish With:**

1. The weight on the front foot.
2. A solid front leg.
3. Knees and thighs touching.
4. The back heel up and on the big toe so the foot is perpendicular to the ground.
5. The back foot can be straight up or tilted slightly behind you, but never over toward the target line.
6. Knees, hips, stomach, chest, shoulders, elbows, and eyes face down the alignment line parallel to your target. The "**K**" Position.
7. Don't forget, eyes at a slight vertical angle at the finish.

***These are your check points, use them!***

A good exercise to practice your finish is to stand next to a chair and place your front hand on it for balance. Standing erect with your back arm from the elbow to the shoulder against the side of your body and your back arm from the elbow to the hand held out so it is parallel to the ground. Now using the middle and lower body, simply twist until the back side of the body turns forward and the knees and thighs touch. Remember to keep your arm parallel to the ground during this movement and release the back foot so the backside releases forward to the front foot and you complete the "**K**" position we are looking for.

### ***The Re-Tilting Of The Shoulders:***

When the backswing is completed, you have created torque on the back leg and are ready to uncoil. When the forward swing begins it initiates one of the most difficult moves in golf, the re-tilting of the shoulders. However, since you have coiled correctly, like preparing for any other forward motion (swinging a bat, throwing a ball, throwing a punch, etc.) your lower body moves first and without trying re-tilts the shoulders correctly. This has you prepared for the correct impact position.

## **IMPACT - "The Moment Of Truth"**

By now, you should have a good idea of what needs to take place during the forward swing. However, there is one point during the forward swing we would like to isolate; that is **impact**, the moment you strike the ball.

When the lower body begins the forward swing, it creates the all important "re-tilting" of the shoulders. This re-tilting of the shoulders is key to a good impact position because that is how we get the shoulders "square" (facing the target line) at the moment of impact.

### **A Solid Impact Position Has Your:**

1. Shoulders facing the target line ("square"), tilting from front to back.
2. Weight on the front foot.
3. Front leg posted firm.
4. Back heel slightly off the ground (1/2 to 2 inches).
5. Both arms fully extended.
6. Hands slightly ahead of the clubface and directly over the ball under the front armpit.

These are the exact positions you want to be in every time you make contact with the ball. No matter what club you are using. A lot of bad swings work because of a good impact position. So emulate these impact check points during your practice sessions.

## **THE FINISH - "Control of Direction"**

Why should we be concerned with our finish position? There are several reasons. When we finish the same, it teaches us discipline and creates good balance and creates the same shaped shots. But most importantly, it tells us where we were at impact.

Once you reach the point where you can hold your finish with complete control, you are ready to learn how the wrists and arms work. As you swing the upper body forward to the finish, practice holding your finish in the following positions:

The thumb of your front hand is directly under the club and over the front-arm bicep. The front arm from the elbow to the shoulder socket is parallel to the ground. Your hands are about at the same height as the top of your head. The arms are out in front of you with the elbows pointing straight ahead (and about one and one-half fists apart) in the same direction as your knees, hips and chest.

While holding this finish position, look at the combination of your club, wrist, and front arm. They should form three sides of a *Square*. This position tells us where the clubhead was at impact. It also insures the swing has traveled the proper path and released at the appropriate time and place, which should give you solid and consistent shots with good direction. From this point on we will refer to this position as the **"Square,"** another key check point.

To prove this, while holding the square at the finish, turn your body back around and face the target line. Slowly let your body re-tilt and the arms return to the address position. If you have finished in the square position, the clubface should return to its original position without any ma-

nipulations from the arms or hands. If you did not form the square at the finish you will notice that you must adjust your arms or hands or both to re-establish your original club behind the ball position.

### **The “Square” - “It Stops Thin & Topped Shots and Controls Slices!”**

The “**Square**” position is very important because about 85% of the time topping and slicing is caused by a breakdown in the front-arm elbow and 10% of the time from the front wrist cupping or hinging. In fact, breaking them simultaneously results in the famous “whiff.” However, by simply swinging to your square position every time, you will dramatically decrease your chances of having these breakdowns.

Later, after mastering the “**Square**,” you can let the club pass through it and go ahead and make a full finish. The difference between the full finish and our training finish is that you continue the arms and club around the head so that when you look in a mirror it appears as though the club is passing through your ears.

Again, how far around you finish will depend on your body’s makeup and flexibility. Don’t forget that the hands are about head height and your trunk and eyes at a slight angle with the club behind the body. The angle of the shaft at the finish will depend on your body’s flexibility.

### **Body Tilt**

Lastly, we would like to focus on the body tilt you maintain during the finish of the swing. All great players finish with the body tilted from the waist to the head at an angle toward the target line. Consistent body angle favorably effects consistent impact and direction. It does that by creating a consistent axis for the body to rotate on.

Once you can execute the backswing, forward swing, and finish in complete control, practice maintaining your body tilt. Check to see that you keep your eyes slightly vertical at the finish. This eye position will help immensely your ability to develop consistent body tilt. So think **eye-angle!**

### **Thumb-to-Thumb Hand Action**

You will remember that earlier in the **Backswing** section we spoke of the club resting on the thumb of the front hand at the top of the backswing. Again during the finish section we talked about the front thumb being underneath the shaft and over the front bicep forming three sides of the “Square.” Together they produce the “**Thumb-to-Thumb**” hand action, correct hand action.

A respected friend, who happens to be very knowledgeable of the golf swing and who is also a 7<sup>th</sup> degree Black Belt Master of Tae Kwon Do, pointed out something very interesting. He said that teaching the hand action using a thumb-to-thumb example clearly shows the difference between a *Western* teaching method and *Eastern* teaching method. He went on to explained that he has observed that many *Western* teachers like to break things down into every incremental movement, lots of detail. An example heard often regarding hand action is, from backswing to finish; push, rotate, lift, cock, pull down, roll over, and release. It is difficult to remember all of

this detail in the split second it takes to hit a golf ball. In fact, when asked, most people cannot give you their age in the time it takes to make a golf swing.

Although knowing in detail what is happening during the swing is comforting to some individuals, trying to make each movement happen individually during a swing often prohibits any of them from happening. This is explained as analytical thinking in this country.

The concept of swing the golf club from Thumb-to-Thumb would be considered an *Eastern* method of teaching the hand action. The simple experience of the club shaft pressure on the front thumb both at the top of the backswing and at the finish is easy to remember and repeat. In addition to being effective, when incorporated with good body rotation, this simple and easy movement guarantees the correct hand action during the golf swing from start to finish. By completing the full motion, all the incremental positions *western* teachers like to work on separately happen with no additional effort. Just one simple thought.

This is referred to as Global thinking in this country. Both Global and Analytical thinking are tied to your neuro-linguistic programming, and in many instances students have to retrain themselves in order to become successful.

Thus, the difference between the two teaching philosophies is that *Western* teachers tend to focus students on more incremental movement while *Eastern* teachers focus on simple, measurable, full motion movements that incorporate every detail into one or two positions. In an effort to help golfers develop a functional swing, our method of teaching embodies a fusion of the best that *Eastern* and *Western* teaching techniques have to offer.

### **Author's Note “Full Swing Trouble Spots”**

In the thirty years I have been teaching golf, and specifically this method for the past twenty, there are four areas with which everyone experiences some difficulty. Not that everyone has difficulty with all four, but they may have problems with one or more. I have not found anyone who has not fought at least one of these demons.

### ***Alignment***

This is the number one killer of a “functional” golf swing. Whether a tour professional, beginning golfer, or anyone in between, playing from parallel is the first thing to breakdown. This demon leads to most of the problems golfers fight; coming over the top, fat shots, poor rotation, leg drive, and lack of distance to name just a few. *Controlling alignment is the most difficult thing you will ever have to do in golf!* Check this first!

### ***High-To-Low Leg Action***

What we see during the backswing, unless taught the correct procedure, is that most golfers straighten the back leg. This places them in a high position at the top of the backswing. Next, they have to re-flex the legs on the downswing so they can get the legs involved in the swing. The problem is, most golfers do not post up on the other side (the finish side of the swing).

Therefore, their legs continue to flex down called “downloading.” Downloading causes fat shots, shanks, and most notably loss of distance and slicing.

You have learned that during the backswing you should keep the back leg as near as you can to the same position it was at address. When you do this the first few times, you will have the experience that you are “sitting down,” when in fact you will be coiling on a level plane. Conversely, when you rotate to the finish posted up (straight front leg) on the front foot, you will have the sensation that you are standing up. Again, you did not stand up you rotated on a level plane. The overall experience, as described to us by thousands of students, is one of the body moving down on the backswing and up to the finish. Remember this is not what is really taking place, you are rotating level.

The “low” experience comes from maintaining the back leg flex. Take a practice swing while watching your back leg and hold the flex. You will experience a sitting down sensation. On the forward swing the front hip is positioned over the front foot and as it rotates around and off the front foot, the leg straightens. You have not actually stood up, its the straightening of the front leg caused by the full rotation of the body that is giving you the sensation of standing up. Again, you have turned level, which is what you want. Since you have been incorrectly told to keep the head down, this can be a disturbing experience. You must accept it as correct and realize that the low-to-high sensation will go away.

### ***The Hands Working Together***

The hands not working together as partners is the third demon we encounter regularly. It seems to be very difficult for amateurs to maintain the **V** angles of their hands to the same point between the back ear and back shoulder. The tendency is to have the front hand **V** pointing up to the front shoulder and the back-hand **V** up the back arm. The result is they are working against each other.

### ***Releasing The Back Heel***

Releasing the back heel up onto the back toe is the last common demon we have to correct. If this does not happen the backside will not release forward properly to allow the arms and hands to work correctly. This directly effects distance and consistency.

These are the four things we continually work on with students. Students who have committed to resolving these problems first have improved to a degree and at a speed that is incredible.

## **“BALANCE”**

### **BALANCE EQUALS CONTROLLED MOTION**

When I was growing up, golf professionals told me, “You’ve got to learn tempo, timing, and balance if your going to be any good!” We know that just having one thought during the golf swing is a chore. How are we to think of three?

Think about this: ***“How can you control an object in your hands if you cannot control your body?”*** How much does a golf club weigh? Does it weigh more than you do? That’s ridiculous, right? So, explain why a 10-13 ounce golf club is throwing people all over our golf courses and driving ranges. If it was a fight, most people would be TKO’d. It doesn’t make much sense, does it?

Right from the start you must realize that to improve your golf swing you must master balance. Balance creates tempo and timing all of these are necessary ingredients to a good, consistent golf swing.

Let me share with you something I found very interesting while fitting students for custom-built golf clubs. One of the tests is for swing speed. To get a consistent average we need a consistent, controlled swing motion. In our school, the approach is to work first on balance. While working on balance with each student (in an effort to create consistency and control of motion), we found that when students were in balance not only did it create better control of their motion and positions, it generated more swing speed. In every case, students felt more relaxed and had the experience that they were swinging easier and under control. They could not believe how much their swing speed increased. This is because good balance creates good tempo. Good tempo creates good timing and timing is critical to a consistent release point. The newly found consistency and distance was almost unbelievable. It was very clear, if there is balance, tempo and timing will follow automatically with more distance not far behind.

### ***What Is A Balanced Swing?***

When asked, we find that most people associate a balanced swing with finishing on the front foot in complete control of the body. This is partially correct.

A perfectly balanced swing is one that, in addition to being balanced on the front foot at the finish, is balanced both on the backswing and forward swing. Picture this, a door opening and closing at the same speed in both directions. That is a balanced swing. In golf we like to see the back and forward swings in balance like the door. We do not want you to open the door slowly then slam it shut. It is best to have an evenly controlled motion; why, because this is your “tempo.”

There is an event that happened in 1977 that I will never forget. It involved a professional golfer that no doubt is one of the toughest competitors ever to play the game, Lanny Wadkins.

I remember that Lanny had lost his PGA card and was playing on sponsors exemptions. He had come to Visalia, California to practice with another great tour player Jerry Heard, who I had worked with on several occasions. While visiting Jerry, we had the opportunity to play golf with Lanny for several days. I recall how Lanny was searching to regain his successful form from previous years and how frustrated he was. Like most golfers in this state he was open to advice from anyone with a different idea. In that week he got advice from a bread truck driver, a dentist, a CPA, and a used car salesman. Nothing worked!

About the third day we were standing on the tee of a par 5; he looked at me and said, "So what do you think?" My response was "Speed up your backswing" (to get it in balance with the forward swing). You can imagine the look I got. However, after a brief discussion about a balanced swing and playing within one's individual personality, and possibly the fact that there was nothing left to try, he gave it a go. My recollection is that success was immediate. After a perfect tee shot, he hit an x-stiff shaft, straight faced driver (which I had just re-shafted for him) off the fairway, 3-wood trajectory, right into the middle of the green. An unbelievable shot he executed twice that day, so in my mind . . . case closed!

After the round Lanny told me he had been working with a teacher on just the opposite, slowing down the backswing. He went on to have a terrific year in 1977. I am not in any stretch of the imagination taking credit for that. During the same period he was also working on returning his putting technique to the way it was during college; we all know you must make putts to win golf tournaments. I believed then, as I do to this day, that getting his swing in balance attributed to him regaining his form. You see, Lanny Wadkins swing tempo was a littler quicker than most, but always in balance; he was just out of balance. I am not sure he ever would have been told to speed up his backswing.

### ***Good Balance Depends On Discipline - "The 10 Count Rule"***

*If you are serious about improving your golf game, from this point on, every time you make a swing of any length for any reason, you must discipline yourself to hold your finish. Practice holding the finish for the count of ten (including practice swings) or until the ball stops rolling (when hitting balls). If you whiff the ball (miss it completely), you still must discipline yourself to hold the finish until you count to ten. This is the only way to begin developing good consistent balance.*

Disciplining yourself to hold your finish is important because it also enables you to check your finish positions and make corrections. Our finished positions will tell us why we hit either a good or bad shot. Also, by doing this you train yourself to swing the body and club on the proper paths and planes consistently. Eventually this will become second nature.

In the previous sections you learned the correct swing motions and positions. To be successful, it is necessary that you have complete control of your body; this can only be accomplished through good balance. Remember: "Self-Discipline & Self-Controll," only you can do it!

**Experienced players please note:** It is here you would return to the "Holding the Club" section to check your grip. This is only in the event you are not satisfied with your ball flight.

## **Training Correct Motions and Positions**

This is the process of making everything you have learned feel comfortable. The only way to achieve this is by repeating the above outlined steps over and over, effectively programming your muscle memory to the correct motions and positions. In the beginning your movements may be rough and jerky, but with repetition, they will become smooth and comfortable. Follow these helpful hints:

Very precisely go through the steps you have learned. This should be a step-by-step task, making sure everything you are trying to do is as correct as possible. Remember your check points.

1. Grip
2. Alignment
3. Ball Position & Width of Stance
4. Body Posture
  - Leg Flex
  - Body Tilt
5. Arm Hang & Shoulder Tilt
6. Head Position
7. Visuals

In the beginning, if you have to purposely place yourself in the proper positions when you start practicing...do it. Then, little by little, begin swinging to the proper positions.

1. Backswing (load)
2. Forward swing (unload)
3. The Finish (control of direction)
4. Eye Angle
5. Balance = tempo & timing

Training now becomes a process of repetition. Be careful to execute the proper motions and positions over and over, from the correct setup position. By repeating the correct motions and positions you are programming your body and muscles to react the same way every time. Using a dancing rhythm (waltz, not break-dancing) is very helpful with improving motion and balance. Eventually you will have the ability to make a consistent golf swing and produce the same kind of shot every time.

***“The challenge you will have is to maintain the commitment to review your step-by-step procedure before each shot and the self-discipline to execute it accordingly.” Rick Walker***

### ***Practicing***

To benefit from all you have learned, accomplish these simple goals:

1. Use the same grip and address positions. Go through each step until you have every one correct.
2. Work on your swing motion and positions, hitting every position correctly with good balance. Good free flowing motion!
3. When you can setup consistently and swing to the **K/Square** positions each time, without trying to hit anything, begin swinging at golf tees. After you can tick (brush over) the golf tee with good rhythm and in the correct positions with complete control, begin placing a golf ball on the tee. Now, with the ball on the tee, see if you can still brush over the tee and execute everything you have been practicing. If you can do this, you will be delighted with the resulting solid consistent shots. In the beginning, the only reason we let you hit golf balls at all is to take away from the boredom of just swinging.

When you have completed goals 1 through 3 you can begin teeing the ball lower and lower until you can hit it off the ground. Practicing with the ball on a tee makes it easier to execute and, at the same, time builds a visual success pattern in your mind. Most importantly, it makes it easier to control your balance and pace.

## ONE SWING WITH ALL THE CLUBS

### ONE SWING WITH ALL THE CLUBS!

When you can swing in complete balance and are able to hold your finish in the proper positions with the short irons, begin practicing with all the clubs.

Follow the routine and swing motions and positions outlined for the longer clubs in "Setup & Ball Positions For The Long Clubs." Do not get upset if you have a little trouble at first with these longer clubs. Keep trying to execute your swing and the longer clubs will become just as consistent as your short ones. Try to remember that as the clubs get longer the path the clubhead has to travel is greater. Thus, the swing naturally takes a little longer to execute. So don't panic, work to maintain good balance and body control.

Do not forget, you are going to use the same pre-shot routine and swing with every club in the bag. The only exception being the changes we'll mention later with the driver.

You have been practicing with the short irons (SW through 7 iron); by now you should have control of your swing with these clubs. If you are executing your system correctly, you should also be producing good golf shots.

### Clubmakers Build Clubs For One Swing!

Now, let's use your swing with the other clubs in the bag. To do this you must understand how the golf clubs were made.

Some people subscribe to the theory that you do not use the same swing with all the clubs. This frankly is not true. The only possible exception is with the driver, and those changes are minor. When building a *Functional Golf Swing* you will use the same swing with every club. A person cannot live long enough to master a different swing for each club in the bag.

For your own information, take your golf clubs and set them up against a wall so each club touches the ground (soles) at the same point on the bottom. What do you notice? That some clubs are closer to the wall than others due to the fact that the shafts are longer. Did you notice that the top of the grips form a straight line parallel to the ground? This tells us that the hands and body will start in the same position. The club manufacturers have designed clubs to make this possible. Like the golf club testing machines, we can use the same swing with every club.

You must think of yourself as "Iron Byron," the ball and club testing machine. You set up the same, rotate the same, and simply adjust the ball further or closer to you due to club length. Then, move forward or back in your stance to set the correct ball position for the club you are using. The setup and swing stay the same! Don't forget that maintaining your posture and hand-to-front leg distance is your primary objective.

With that explanation of the clubs, we can begin using the medium and long clubs. These are the 6-iron through the fairway woods.

### **Setup & Ball Position For The Long Clubs (6 Iron - Fairway Woods)**

The medium and long clubs have less loft, so it is necessary to strike the ball at the bottom of the swing arc (at the center or apex of the swing) producing more of a level blow. The bottom of the arch is directly below the front armpit so this is where we want you to position the ball. Although it is acceptable to vary the width of your stance slightly for comfort and balance, the ball position remains the same. Always below the front armpit.

If you check yourself in a mirror you can see exactly how far the ball should be inside the front foot when it is directly below the front armpit. Make note of this distance in inches, by knowing in inches it will make it easier to correctly position the ball consistently during both practice and play periods. Remember, the distance from the front heel will vary from person to person due to individual body shapes and sizes. It is an individual checkpoint for you to thoroughly understand during setup.

It is very important to remember: when establishing your ball position below the front armpit, your shoulders remain parallel to the target line. Your check point for this is your shoulders; they will tilt from front to back if they are parallel to the target line and parallel to the ground if they are off line.

The width of the stance with the medium and long clubs should be slightly wider than the short irons. The "Drip Line" would have the water hitting you some where between the laces and inside edge of your shoes.

Your ball position and stance procedure for the long clubs would be:

1. With the feet together and against the alignment club, take a small step forward (toward the target) with your front foot to set the ball position.
2. With the back foot, take a larger step back (away from the target and along the alignment club) until the correct width of stance is reached.
3. Remember to keep the head centered between the heels and the weight balanced from front to back and side to side.

Lets take a moment to review what you will experience with correct short and long iron ball positions. With the short irons you will remember the head is over the ball and the front hand is under the front arm pit placing it ahead of the ball. Now with the long irons the head will be behind the ball (still in the center of the feet) and the front hand over the ball. This is due to the fact that you have moved the ball forward in your stance. There you have it, proper width of stance and perfect ball position, and you can do it every time.

*It is important to understand that the width of stance we suggest is a starting point. Based on your ability to maintain balance during the swing, your width may vary slightly.*

From this point on you can practice with all your golf clubs making sure to follow your step-by-step routine. If you do not take the time and care to get ready to hit a shot, you cannot expect your swing or the resulting shot to be correct. Practice the proper motions and positions from the correct setup position... they never change.

## The Driver

### “THE MOST DIFFICULT CLUB IN YOUR BAG!”

#### The Driver (#1 Wood)

This club is so important that it has its own chapter. Did you ever hear “drive for show and putt for dough?” If you believe that, you won’t be shooting too many low scores.

Just remember, if you do not place the ball in play off the tee, you cannot get it on the green in regulation. Thus, you are putting for nothing but bogies or worse. Let there be no misunderstanding here, the tee shot is the most important shot in golf. If you don’t believe me, ask the people who make their living playing golf.

Why do you think the driver is the most difficult club to master? Think about this for a moment. **“Why do you use an on-the-ground swing for an off-the-ground shot?”**

You buy a large bucket with 72 balls in it; you hit 62 of them with your irons and fairway woods off the ground. Then you put a ball on a tee, up off the ground, and where do you place the driver? On the ground behind the teed-up ball; where you have, for 62 balls, practiced returning the club to the ground!

So what do you think is going to happen next? You return the club to the ground and “sky” the ball (pop it up off the top of the club). What does this result in? You spend the rest of your life pulling the front arm up, trying to catch the ball in the center of the clubface and end up with a sliced or topped shot.

To hit the driver requires a few changes to the setup and preparation, *not a new or different swing*, just an adjustment to the setup. Changes to the basic setup:

1. It is the only club that we do not return to an on-the-ground position.
2. We tee the ball up off the ground.
3. We use a wider stance. The drip line of shoulders would be the inside edge of your shoes.
4. The hands are behind the ball and over the clubhead (but still under the front armpit and opposite the inside of the front thigh). Remember, this forms a straight line from the clubhead to the front shoulder (the **Y** position).
5. When making the backswing, the front shoulder will turn to the center of the body, giving the sensation that it is well behind the ball. Remember, when making a full swing, no matter what the club, be sure to turn the backswing to the center of the chest.
6. Lastly, we strike the ball with the club in an off-the-ground position.

The question is, how do we strike a ball in an off-the-ground position consistently? The following are examples of various approaches the off-the-ground swing:

1. The most common way is to position the ball a little ahead of the center of the swing (your front armpit), somewhere around the inside edge of the front foot heel. This allows the club to strike the ball just past center on a level or slight upward blow.
2. Start with the ball directly below the front armpit and merely address the ball with the club up off the ground and directly behind the ball. Jack Nicklaus was the first to bring this to prominence.
3. Start by holding the club as in #2 above and simply let the club drop to the ground. You will notice that the ball is now somewhere on the toe of the club (depending on how high the ball is teed). Now when the swing is made, the club will be swung up and out to the ball. This creates an off-the-ground shot while still maintaining your on-the-ground swing posture. This has merit because no changes are required of the on-the-ground swing.
4. Tee the ball lower and lightly ground the club on the top of the grass. Then simply brush the grass and tee at the same time. The result should be a solid tee shot.

*With regard to #3, how far off the toe you play the ball will be determined by how high you tee the ball. While holding the club behind the teed-up ball and in the center of the clubface, let the driver drop to the ground. It will drop leaving some part of the toe of the club behind the ball. The higher you tee the ball up the more out on the toe you will have to play the ball. This is your barometer as to where you consistently want to place the clubhead in relation to the ball.*

We do not recommend any one of these ways over the other. It does not matter which adjustment you make, only that you are aware that one has to be made. With the methods we have mentioned you should not have to make any adjustment to your on-the-ground swing with which you are becoming so successful.

Now that you understand the off-the-ground concept, with a little practice you might come up with your own method. When you do, let us know because there are most likely thousands of golfers like yourself for whom it would help.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

### FOLLOW THE “BLUEPRINT” AND BUILD A FUNCTIONAL SWING

By following these simple principles, our *blueprint*, you should improve rather quickly and measurably. Just remember that 99% of the time your problems will originate with the setup and 99% of that will be poor alignment.

When training, use your *target* and *alignment clubs* to keep your setup and visuals keen and alert. When playing, discipline yourself to pick a spot on the ground to establish your *alignment line* because this line is what you will be using to guide you during the setup procedure. Always make sure you are aligned parallel to your *target line*. You will be surprised how consistent your ball striking, distance, and direction will become through proper alignment.

Finally, the quicker you master complete balance and body control during the load (backswing), unload (downswing), and finishing, the faster your scores will drop.

The best advice you can get is to be patient and precise with what you are doing. We find that the golfers who have the most trouble focus too much on the results and not on the process. Take the time to prepare yourself for each shot. Always check your alignment and address positions and ***always*** hold your finish in complete control so you can review your check points.

Most importantly, stay in tune with your body and how it executes the correct motions and positions. If you take the *try until* approach, your body will find a way to execute the correct swing procedures. Even though the new experiences may not be like any you have had before, stay with them. If the positions are correct, embrace the new experiences, and continue to build and improve a golf swing that works with your body and is fundamentally correct.

***You Can Do It!***

***With This Training System, You Will Do It!***