HOW TO MASTER
A GREAT GOLF SWING

FIFTEEN FUNDAMENTALS TO BUILD A GREAT SWING

THE PISTOL GRIP
POSITIONING THE CLUBHEAD
ROLLING THE ELBOWS INWARD
THE FORWARD PRESS
THE TOE-UP POSITION
HITTING WITH THE RIGHT HAND
AND MANY MORE . . .

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Chapter Two

Learning To Use Fundamentals

Anyone can play golf and, with practice, can play consistently well. Many golfers fall victim to self-imposed problems and frustration in golf, however, because they have not developed a sound golf swing based on fundamentals.

One dictionary defines a fundamental as “a principle, rule, law, etc., that forms a foundation or basis, essential part, indispensable, underlying.” A golf fundamental, then, may be defined as “a position or movement that is essential to building a strong foundation for a sound, repeating golf swing.”

The combination of inaccuracies that cause problems in golf is neither prevented nor corrected by doing a few things right. You prevent problems by doing most things right and correct them by mastering specific positions or movements that relate to specific problems.

Understanding and applying these basic positions and movements help individual golfers improve personal performance and proficiency in two ways: (1) by learning how to establish positions initially that promote coordination, thereby avoiding problems; and (2) when problems do occur, by knowing how to correct or adjust those parts of the swing that are not fundamentally correct by comparing their swing with basics. Without fundamental guidelines as points of reference, however, it is difficult to establish correct positions, keep the swing intact, or analyze and correct swing problems.
Building a basic golf swing is the same as building a prefabricated house. Each must be built on a strong foundation with sections built independently that are strong enough to give strength to the whole. Units or sections of the swing, although always part of the whole, are the grip, position of address, backswing, downswing, and follow-through. These units are then connected with fundamental procedures such as “the waggle” and forward press that tend to promote good timing and rhythm—and all are developed in the learning stage by simply connecting the units in sequence.

All golfers use some fundamentals, whether they are aware of them or not. While they may use some, however, most golfers can improve their swing considerably by learning to use more fundamentals more effectively. Since each golfer and each golf swing is unique and not everyone uses fundamentals in exactly the same way, not all golfers can improve or correct their swing by using the same fundamentals. Therefore, in both teaching and learning, learning which fundamentals affect each individual swing is the key to self-improvement. The following chapters help you understand and achieve that goal for more enjoyment of golf.
PART I
The Grip
Chapter Three

Analyzing the Grip

An accurate grip is the most basically important ingredient in a reliable golf swing, contributing about 60 percent to its overall efficiency. Difficulty in other sections of the swing can frequently be traced directly back to the grip, because an incorrect hand position may have restricted the ability of muscles in other parts of the body to perform correctly. This inability of the other muscles gives the false impression that the difficulty lies somewhere other than in the grip.

Because the grip is so basic, golfers initially develop one that seems comfortable but does not necessarily contribute to the swing as it should. Initial comfort in golf may not always imply correctness; therefore, a study of the contribution the hands make to the swing, both separately and as a unit, can benefit even experienced golfers who presume their grip is correct.

The Vardon, or overlapping, grip—named after British champion Harry Vardon—positions the little finger of the right hand over the left forefinger, and it is rarely disputed as being the most popular put-together formula. The interlocking grip, where the left forefinger is locked in between the last two fingers of the right hand, is equally effective. This book refers to the more common overlapping grip throughout, but the principles applied refer to all golf grips, including the less common 10-finger grip.

The obvious purpose of establishing the grip is to enable the hands
to work together as a closely knit unit. However, establishing the grip and actually completing the grip are not exactly the same. Because the right hand is positioned lower on the club than the left, extending the right arm to complete the grip exerts a muscular influence on other positions. Unless firmly secured, these other established positions may then inadvertently be changed.

Aligning the hands and clubface square to each other helps return the clubface to square when the hands hit through the ball.

FIGURE 2
To promote full understanding, Part I presents a study of the grip itself, studying each hand separately as well as together. Part II then separates the hands while introducing fundamentals that position the clubhead, feet, and lower body before the right arm moves to position the right hand.

Before we actually begin studying the grip, look at your hands and study their natural action. Although alike, they oppose each other, working independently yet together through muscular control.

Use either hand to toss a soft object (such as a wad of paper) up in the air and hit it to the left with the palm of your right hand. Notice that your hand automatically pulls back with a little wrist action to slap or hit the object for distance. To hit the paper in the same direction with the left hand, however, you use the back of your hand, employing a natural firm-wristed "batting" effect, striving to hit the object straight rather than far. Both hands hit squarely at impact, however, and the same natural use of the hands is employed in the swing; through the grip you impart this action to the clubhead. The left-hand grip allows the left arm to keep the ball on target with backhanded firmness, while the right-hand grip allows the hand to smack the ball for distance.

The essential function of the grip is to align the hands and clubface at address in a manner that will return the clubface to square at impact. Aligning the back of the left hand, the palm of the right hand, and the clubface all square to each other and to the target in the address position returns the clubface to square when the hands hit naturally back through the ball. (Figure 2) Once established square, the hands and clubface swing squarely together throughout the golf swing; therefore, the alignment of the thumbs in relation to the toe of the clubhead at address can be used as a guideline for swinging correctly as well as for establishing positions at address.

Top performance in golf is not determined by brute force but by coordination of muscles, and as awkward as it seems, the grip is devised to promote accuracy and coordination throughout the entire golf swing. Though it isn't initially comfortable, it soon becomes so with practice.

Golf clubs are only extensions of the arms, and the grip is a sensibly constructed tool for transferring power from the body to the clubhead through the hands. They must be positioned accurately, closely united, firm, and active in order for good hand action to coordinate with other swing movements. An accurate grip develops confidence by promoting accuracy and coordination in a sound repeating swing.
Chapter Four

Fundamental No. 1: The Left-Hand Pistol Grip

An accurate grip is the very foundation of an accurate golf swing. Although any method will teach the same left-hand grip as taught by the pistol grip, the pistol grip uses the hand’s natural conformity to the shooting position to establish the grip more naturally.

The Procedure

- Center the clubhead between your feet, square the clubface toward a target, and steady the club by holding the tip of the handle with your right hand. (Figure 4)
Assume a shooting position with your left hand: point the forefinger straight ahead with the other three fingers in an open cupped position. Align the three fingers parallel to the thumb. (Figure 5)

Extend your left arm to aim the forefinger alongside and straight down the shaft. Square the back of the left hand directly toward the target and measure the top of the handle to the top joint of the thumb where the wrist breaks. (Figure 6)

Bend your wrist to cock your hand downward. The thumb, rather than the forefinger, will then aim alongside and straight down the shaft. The forefinger will point between your feet, toward your heels, and the knuckles of the cupped fingers will be parallel to the handle. (Figure 7)
Use your right hand to press the handle firmly down into the upper joints of the three cupped fingers and the base of the palm by pressing a small fold of skin from the palm down onto the last two fingers. (Figure 8)

Leaving the thumb and forefinger off the club, close your hand by gripping up with the fingers while pressing down with the heel pad of the hand. A tiny bit of muscle should extend over the tip of the handle. The gripping action of the hand will cock your left wrist inward. (Figure 9)

Drop your thumb straight down on top of the handle and lightly curl the forefinger around the handle of the club. (Figure 10)
Press down slightly with the flat pad of the end of the thumb. Although the thumb remains on top, firming the grip will pinch the base of the V formed by the thumb and forefinger together, and the line of the V should aim toward the right shoulder. (Figure 11)

**Importance of the Procedure**

Mastering the left-hand pistol grip:
A. *cocks the hand into position so you can grip the club naturally while maintaining an upright posture*
B. *locks the club into position with a palm, three-finger grip*
C. *strengthens the left-hand grip*
D. *accurately positions the left thumb*
E. *removes the left-hand pincer fingers as a control factor in the swing*
somewhat stronger position, those with weak hands and those who consistently overswing or lose control of the clubhead at the top of the swing should try a longer thumb position. (Figure 16B)

Regardless of whether the left thumb is long or short (and you should experiment to see which gives more control), positioning the thumb straight down the shaft at address positions it directly under the shaft at the top of the swing, reinforcing the hand against letting go at the top and dropping the clubhead.

Through the backswing the left wrist is straight and the left hand hinges upward from the base of the thumb; consequently it is important to position the hand and thumb to work naturally, as well as correctly, through the backswing. Positioning the hands incorrectly causes inaccuracy through the wrist break.

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**E: Removes the left-hand pincer fingers as a control factor in the swing.**

The pincer fingers are the tips of the thumb and forefinger. Although their viselike strength may have everyday usefulness, they must not press tightly together in golf, for this will tighten outside rather than inside muscles of the arm, which causes tension and overcontrolling of the clubhead. To feel the muscular difference in your arm, first tighten only the last three fingers of your left hand (which are used to grip the club), then press just the tips of the thumb and forefinger together.

Pinching together the base of the V formed by the thumb and forefinger and lightly curling the forefinger around the club prevent you from creating tension in the hand, arm, and shoulder at address while still allowing your hand to be as strong as it should be. At the same time, the pincer fingers are prevented from helping your hands control the clubhead.
Chapter Five

Fundamental No. 2: The Right-Hand Grip

Although the left-hand grip is established with the clubhead on the ground, it is easier to establish, strengthen, or check the right-hand grip for accuracy by lifting the clubhead off the ground.

The Procedure

› Square the clubface to the target with the left-hand grip, then lift the clubhead upward to position the right hand. Aim the back of the left hand and the palm of the right hand directly toward the target with your palms directly facing each other. The hands and clubface will then be square to each other and to the target. (Figure 18)
Keeping the right palm open, place the two middle fingers of the right hand down firmly on the left forefinger and firmly press the handle into the two middle fingers at the base of the palm (A). The little finger of the right hand will then lie over the forefinger of the left hand (B). (Figure 19)

With the thumb and forefinger still open, wrap the two middle fingers around the club and make certain your palms are still aligned. The tips of the two fingers should touch, but not overlap, the left thumb (A). Although the little finger falls naturally into place, it generally seats itself comfortably under the knuckle of the left forefinger (B). (Figure 20)
As the club is gripped firmly in the two middle fingers, the upper joint of the “trigger” forefinger presses against the handle. Draw the right hand back a bit—with the palm still open (A)—and press the club to the right, pressing the handle even more firmly under the muscle pad and into this strong position (B). (Figure 21)

Pinch the base of the thumb and forefinger together (A), keep the middle fingers firm (B), and draw the right hand down and over the left thumb (C). The thumb will fit snugly in the cup of the right hand. (Figure 22)

Firmly position the right thumb slightly offset to the left on the club (A) and lightly close the forefinger (B). (Figure 23)

The line of the V formed by the thumb and forefinger should aim between the chin and right shoulder. (See page 26, Figure 25A)
Importance of the Procedure

Mastering the right-hand grip:
A. helps position the right hand naturally while keeping your posture upright
B. strengthens the grip
C. develops controlled right-hand power
D. accurately positions the right thumb
E. removes the right-hand pincer fingers as a control factor in the swing

A: Helps position the right hand naturally while keeping your posture upright.
Placing the clubhead on the ground to establish the left-hand grip places the shaft at an angle that corresponds comfortably with the diagonal line of the hand. Holding the clubhead downward makes it easy to grip the club correctly because the handle lies diagonally across the base of the palm. When the hands are together and the grip is completed, however, the angle of the hands is not the same. Gripping the club in the two middle fingers with the little finger off the shaft results in the angle of the right hand being square rather than diagonal. (Figure 24A)

Because it is difficult to position a square hand on a diagonal handle without leaning over too far, raising the clubhead to establish the right-hand grip helps set your hand correctly, keeping your posture upright at the same time. (Figure 24B)

Lifting the clubhead off the ground in practice to position the right hand quickly develops a firm, comfortable feeling for securing the right-hand grip. So much so, in fact, that a large percentage of golfers, whether aware of it or not, “waggle” the clubhead off the ground while setting up to the ball, instinctively promoting both comfort and accuracy while securing the right-hand grip as part of the setup procedure.

B: Strengthens the grip.
The hands must be united closely throughout the swing to maintain control of the clubhead. Regardless of how sound the swing is, somewhere the hands might separate unless they are strong at address. Separation directs one hand or the other (usually the dominant right hand) through the hitting zone with enough force to
E: Removes the right-hand pincer fingers as a control factor in the swing.

When your forefingers are curled lightly around the club, both hands prevent the pincer fingers from controlling the clubhead. The forefingers should feel soft, as if you're handing a pencil to someone. (Figure 27) Lightly closing the forefingers turns them into "feel" fingers—a sort of sensory guide in the grip—but prevents the tips of the forefingers from joining forces with the thumbs to overcontrol the clubhead while swinging or to cause tension at address.

The feeling in the forefingers is similar to that of handing a pencil to someone.
As millions of golfers will attest, mastering a strong, consistent, and accurate golf swing is no easy feat. Yet, as leading golf-swing analyst Maxine Van Evera Lupo shows in this revolutionary book, any golfer—by focusing on the fifteen fundamentals and following the step-by-step instructions for each—can master the proper moves and positions that ensure a correct and controlled swing. Using this sequential method of instruction, the author clearly examines each swing element in detail. The golfer can then compare his or her movements with those discussed in the book and depicted in more than two hundred line drawings, and then adjust those components that are not fundamentally correct.

This breakthrough book eliminates the endless tips and quick fixes that clutter most instructional golf books. The result is a clear, concise blueprint for understanding the swing’s makeup that enables the golfer to achieve a consistently smooth and natural swing.

Some of the highly effective swing components described include pushing the clubhead into a toe-up position, hitting with the right hand, and the all-important waggle. A special chart lists 130 of the most common problems golfers have, explains their causes, and directs the reader to the appropriate fundamental (or fundamentals) for correcting each trouble area.

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