

THIS IS THE SECRET (1986) BY HENRY COTTON

DECODED (10/2016) "The left hand has to b--- b--- ag---t the r---." By Seymour Dunn, 1922, 1934

HERE'S HOW THE LEFT HAND WORKS

of The Dunns and Gourlays of Musselborough, Scotland www.seymourdunn.com

THE 'V's' MUST BE PARALLEL



by the grip of the hand receives a jar if any resistance is offered by the left arm and hand.

The only grip with which a maximum whip through with the hands can be employed is the 'two-knuckle' type. As can be seen here, my left wrist and arm have played their rôle exactly in helping the right hand to thrash the ball as the face of the club is brought up square at impact with the left hand.

The point where the actual hinging of the wrist takes place will decide the flight of the ball. An early hinging will give a high floating shot, a late hinging will produce a low flying wedge-type flight — the old push shot, in fact. There is one essential — your left arm must be strong and educated.

This is where you can get the full value of a strong left arm. My left wrist position here is ideal. I hope you can all do it.

A COLLAPSE



Here we have a 'let go' of the club-shaft in the hands, as can be seen by the angle of the club at impact. The result was that this ball was smothered to the left. The left arm action is poor, but if the club had not slipped in the hands a fair result would have been obtained, even with the elbows so far apart and the bent left arm. Even a pair of gloves does not cover up entirely a weak hold on the club.



You do not have to push at every ball — you can play many pitch shots the easy way. Here I am playing a half No. 9 iron shot with the minimum of strain and effort. The blurred ball can be seen.

The action of the left hand, which I always seem to have used, was seen in a similar shot on the front page of 'Golf Illustrated' away back in 1931. This is not scooping the shot, for the ball is hit down and through, but with the minimum of divot taking. The left wrist hinges, keeping the blade square.



In the Open Championship at Muirfield in 1948. The left hand taking the hit — right arm bent at impact as usual.



I do not like to see the hands forced over the club shaft so that the 'V's' point to opposite shoulders; it is a sort of 'falsely strong' position.

In photograph 3 the golfer has tried to place his right hand correctly, but this hand will slip off its position on top of the other hand. The 'V's' must be parallel. My pupil got her right hand placed in photograph 1 so far over the club-shaft that all she could do was to push at the ball. Not until the hand was placed as in photograph 2 could she get an effective whip into the ball. The 'V's' are parallel in photograph 2; in photograph 1 they oppose. In photograph 3 the right rides high on the left — too high.

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Here I have been snapped after playing a No. 8 iron shot. I have followed through well. The club-head can be said to have been thrown through on the line to the hole. This is only one way to finish this type of shot and, curiously enough, I find I can over-do it and many shots of mine which finish, say, flag-high left of the pin, come from following through too much. Many good golfers break their left arms long before this.

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You all know the old golf axioms about 'hitting past the chin' and 'letting the club-head do the work'. Both are golden rules, but many people have never seen a picture showing exactly how the left hand looks when these axioms have been translated into action.

In the particular stroke shown above, a pitch with a No. 7 iron, I have played well under my head. I have allowed my right knee to ease as the left arm follows on and have let the left wrist hinge to ensure the club-head can continue on its way.

Many golfers hesitate to take the strain of the shot on the back of the left hand, with the left arm held straight. But there is no danger in trying to hold the arm straight, if the grip used is of the 'two-knuckle' variety (which I employ), because if the arm is not strong enough to stay straight, the elbow-bend acts as a safety valve.

One sometimes hears of golfers suffering from 'tennis elbow'. This is often the painful consequence of using a three- or four-knuckle grip and then trying to whip the ball. The elbow joint locked

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HITTING AGAINST THE BACK OF THE LEFT HAND

The left hand and impact positions that handicap golfers seek; there is no club-slip here, beginners note.

By Ronald Ross 2016



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Swinging under my head with an iron club. This angle shows my hand action and how the nose of the club will be pointing to the hole at this moment of the follow-through.



In the photograph of myself driving (next page) can be seen the little flashes of light from the steps of my chromium-plated shaft. This is not altogether a camera shutter distortion, but the shaft springing the club-head forward as the power is applied.

Here I am putting all the strain on the hands; they are not funking their task, as I find occurs in the swing of many handicap golfers. My hands have been educated to take the strain, but they need constant training or else they get slack.

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Myself driving

his right arm is beautifully bent (every good golfer hits the ball on a bent right arm, it straightens only after impact) and is already beginning to 'lever'. So many instructors and golf theorists claim that this is impossible — a club must be swung with the club-head pulling the golfer through. This works as a beginner idea, but the power players make their own rules. This is not camera distortion. Do not think this is a deception by the camera, it is just what happens when strong hands set out to get the club-head 'there' on time and are going flat out.

Left arm too stiff brings tension into the swing, and I think does not help rhythm or club-head speed.

A too-tight grip with the left hand, especially if three or four knuckles are showing at address, tends to stiffen the whole hand action, and so the right hand can never deliver the hit in time.

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I have always seen from my very earliest days, when I began to practise madly, hoping to become a champion one day, that with a one- or two-knuckle left-hand grip I could really turn the back of my left hand to the ball more freely, with no danger of overdoing it, and that furthermore the right hand could really be allowed to 'pour' its power into the shot without doing any harm.

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Myself, just after impact

THE PRO. AT WORK



'From here the right hand brings the club-head through — as the left begins to hinge.' Most pupils have not got this action naturally, but by holding the club as I do here and making the club-head accelerate, the pupil gets the feeling. The left wrist does not just tow the club-head along indefinitely; somewhere at a variable point with each player, and for various shots, it will help the right hand to whip the club-head through. It gives a back-handed kick on its own.

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Myself in 1953 when practising, keeping my chin behind the ball.

In the photograph of myself (right) as the club-head overtakes the left arm, the shaft, firmly held at the grip end as in a vice (it must always be so at impact; it can be freely and more loosely held in other parts of the swing, but at impact never otherwise than firm) has just finished its whip forward. This means, in this case, a well-timed shot; the maximum club-head speed for the effort applied. The helping whip of the shaft can be imagined and the ball can be seen on its way.

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Myself, with firm grip at impact

Back swing too stiff is more common in America because there many of the so-called modern school believe that wrist action as we know it — where the wrists open and close the club-face — is out of date. They are very wrong.

So when golf instructors say 'Let your left arm control the swing', they ought to add: 'If your right arm will allow it.' That is why an educated right arm is essential. Yet how many instructors teach their pupils how to use this arm and hand?

Many practise like wooden dolls with braced arms and dead hands. My regular comment on this is that it is a strong young man's method, and few humans can get enough speed into the club-head at impact without using all the power available, and that means letting the wrists work naturally.

My essentials: to swing inside-to-out and to hit past the left wrist with the head of the club.

"The ideal golf swing is a sweep plus a hit. The sweep comes from the downward sweep of the left arm; the hit comes from a last instant slap with the right forearm and wrist. It is not the rotary shoulder movement nor the downward arm sweeping movement that speeds up the club head. It is the right hand and forearm. A golfer is no stronger than his hands." By Seymour Dunn, 1934

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As explained by Sir Henry Cotton on YouTube™
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DL4dU3p5sRE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W9KIukhkmBg>

