

Power *feel* **GOLF**

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this book to my wife Joan and our children Eben, Amy and Trevor. Without their support and encouragement, this book would have never been possible. I would also like to thank all the wonderful friends, students and other teaching professionals who allowed me to experiment with them or shared their ideas with me. Their help was invaluable in creating a method of teaching that allows everyone to play their best while keeping golf fun and simple. Through them I have grown as a student and as a teacher of the game.

As a person, understanding and sharing your gifts with others is what life is all about.

Eben Dennis

POWER-FEEL GOLF

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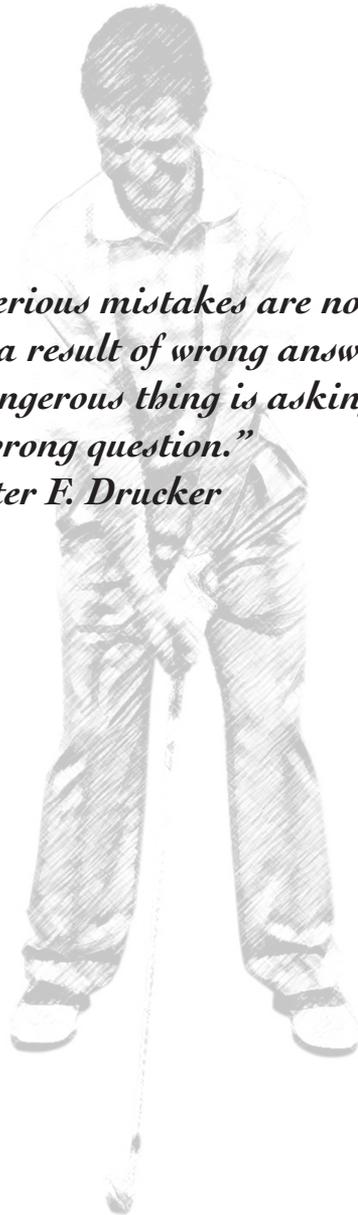
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*“The most serious mistakes are not
being made as a result of wrong answers.
The truly dangerous thing is asking
the wrong question.”*
Peter F. Drucker



INTRODUCTION

A Novel Approach to Improving Your Golf Game

Golf is a game – to be enjoyed. When we clutter our minds with the mechanics of the golf swing, we tend to be overwhelmed and actually lose the joy of the game of golf. The purpose of this book is to liberate you from thoughts and techniques that make the golf swing difficult, if not impossible. This book is about allowing you to enjoy golf by remembering only one basic process that will serve you well with every golf swing and in every part of your golf game.

A NEW VIEW

The theory that I'm going to propose is not unlike waking up one morning to see that the sky is purple. You'd see it, but you could scarcely believe it. And every time you'd walk outside for the next year, you'd look up and have to remind yourself that the sky was no longer blue. Eventually, however, you'd get used to it, and forget what used to be.

That is the notion behind this book. It's a different theory than any other golf instruction to which you've been exposed. It will

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teach you a new way to think about how to apply a golf club to a ball. It is a simple method that will allow you to improve immediately, but may take some time to become familiar because of your preconceived notions regarding a “golf swing.” But, once the concepts of the theory become second nature, you will learn that this method allows you to tap your innate abilities and utilize them to become a better player and scorer. It will also free you from having to look for a quick fix; instead, this concept is the foundation for your best golf swing and game for the rest of your life. The three stages of any new idea that changes the status quo are ridicule, denial, and then acceptance. After reading this book, you’ll reach that third stage and know that this simple concept will change your golf game forever.

LESSONS FROM THE BEST

The inspiration for this instructional concept was passed on to me from some of the best players in golf. Growing up in Houston, I learned from some of the game’s top players, absorbing knowledge while developing a simple approach to the game. At Champions Golf Club, owned by golf legends Jimmy Demaret and Jackie Burke, I had constant exposure to these two legends as well as the

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likes of Ben Hogan and Arnold Palmer. On one occasion, Hogan spoke to me of the key role the hands play in the golf swing. Talking with him, and watching him play and practice, it became obvious that he focused on his hands and their dominant role in his swing. Hogan was fond of saying he wished he had two right hands; that's because his focus was always on the role of the hands in the swing, and the feedback and control they offered when initiating movement. A second right hand would never get in the way of his real right hand. Those thoughts, ideas, and his level of focus are what I'll always remember about him.

My next epiphany came courtesy of Demaret in the summer of 1968. I was fortunate enough to play nine holes with the club founder, who was then in his late 50's. He hadn't competed for at least 10 years and probably hadn't taken a golf swing in months. I was a brash 15 year-old who thought he was a pretty good player. I shot even-par 35 on the back nine of the Cypress Creek course, but Demaret shot 31 and made it look effortless. Several times during the round, I asked him how it was all so easy for him, and after the fifth time I asked, he finally answered, "I just look where I want to go, then feel the shot and go there." I remember being shocked at his simple answer. But Demaret's

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single-minded focus, together with Hogan's commitment to the hands, are the cornerstone concepts of the methods you will learn by reading and understanding this book.

EVOLUTION OF A THEORY

As I – and my back – continued to mature, I was forced to find a simpler way to play when I developed disc problems. That's when the ideas and concepts I learned in the 1960's from Demaret and Hogan really began to make sense, and benefit me physically. Inspired by my physical limitations, I combined the lessons learned from Demaret, Burke, Hogan, and others, and have boiled down the action of striking a golf ball to concepts most players can grasp. Once learned, these concepts will totally change the way you experience the golf swing, and therefore the game of golf, forever. You'll understand why the touring pros' swings have similarities, but are as different as snowflakes. It will become equally obvious why most amateurs look so awkward when setting up and swinging.

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WHAT YOU WILL LEARN

A recent Newsweek study asked test subjects to think about their golf swing while in a Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machine. The conclusion was that the best golfers had the least amount of brain activity, and high handicappers had high brain activity. The data was clear. Good golfers were more singularly-focused. According to John Milton, the study's author, high handicappers "get overwhelmed by details." In this book, I will teach you one simple process that can be applied to all golf shots. This book will break down pre-conceived notions about using "big" and "small" muscles in your golf swing, and will also enhance your awareness of what is happening in your body and mind before and during the swing that can create or destroy your best efforts. In short, it will help you realize the importance of focus on your hands and how to create and maintain a clear path for them. You will learn the one thought that will allow you to play better, discover how to keep your mind on the key action or swing thought, and realize how to prevent unnecessary thoughts from eroding your focus. A by-product of this book's primary teachings is simplifying the game of golf.

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On the other hand, I will not go into how to play every conceivable shot. Those shots depend on your creativity, imagination, and propensity to execute conceptions. However, a more confident player, focused and aware of his abilities and limitations, has a better chance of pulling off any given shot.

In addition, this book will not teach you the mechanics of a golf swing. The instruction in this book is not intended to be “technically” correct in terms of physics, because the way our mind perceives feel is too difficult to translate into a technical description of the action. In other words, the description of the experience and the experience are not the same. Anyone looking for the technical description of motion and action/reaction won’t find it here. Our discussion will center around understanding and striving toward mastery of interrelated mental and physical concepts.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Even a multiple-major winner like Tiger Woods has room for improvement. You may have farther to go than him, but most of us are capable of getting “there” - or close. Hastening your journey, and helping you continue to improve throughout your life, is the primary

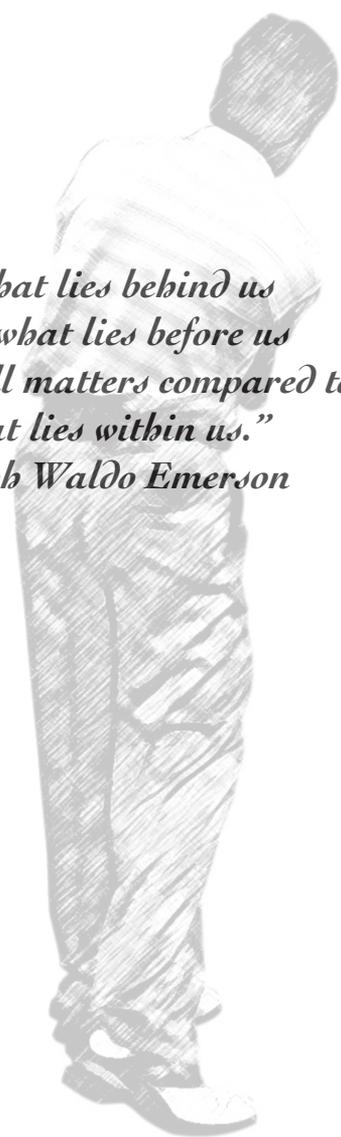
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purpose of this book. This is not to say you'll begin to average 390 yards off the tee after reading this book, or instantly attain a professional's touch around the green. However, you will learn how you can play better golf based on practice and your physical capabilities.

As you spend time reading this book and absorbing the comments, it may be helpful for you to read it through the first time in chronological order. Although the theory of this book is that there is only one simple process for creating a golf shot, each chapter builds on a step or application of that process. Once you've read all the chapters, you can go back and concentrate on the part of the golf process for which you need the most help.

Remember—there is no secret. There are only easier ways or more difficult ways to do things or be successful. You must choose between an easier path or a more difficult path. The only difference is the knowledge to know the difference between them. It is much like crossing a river. If you know where the water is shallow and where the water is deep, you can choose correctly. Through many years of study and research and information given to me by some of the greatest players of all time, I have discovered the easier path to your best golf. So let this book and my videos be your foundation to successful and fun golf.

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*“What lies behind us
and what lies before us
are small matters compared to
what lies within us.”
Ralph Waldo Emerson*

CHAPTER 1

Begin with the Basics – The Right Start

Have you been trying to improve your golf game to no avail? If so, it is time to make a change. Often, you hear self-help experts proclaim that simplicity is key to most everything in life. “If you can find the lowest common denominator to whatever it is you want to do, you will not only enjoy it more, you will probably excel at it.”

The premise of this book is to help you understand and control your focus on a simple process that you can use to your advantage on the golf course. The basics of any golf shot are rooted in the one simple process that will be reiterated throughout this book.

1. Understand the golf club – how it is built and designed to work.
2. Control the club in your hands.
3. Know the path your golf swing should take.
4. Clear that path.
5. Use the path that is clear – don’t force it.
6. Use your instinct and trust that you’ve chosen the right path.

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Once you understand and achieve these six steps, you will be on your way to improving your golf game. This chapter is devoted to the first two steps in the process – understanding the design of a golf club and learning to control the club in your hands.

THE RIGHT EQUIPMENT

Anytime you use a tool, whether it is a shovel, a pencil, or a golf club, it is important for you to understand the purpose and the basic design of the tool. Golf clubs are built on an angle to allow you to produce accurate golf shots and to make an arc with your golf swing. Even though your hands can only move backwards and forwards during a golf swing (not up and down like you have always heard), the club design allows for the club to move in an arc. This same basic club design exists in each of the 14 different clubs; your challenge is to learn to choose the club that will help you achieve your desired shot. Just as you wouldn't use a hammer to dig a hole or a shovel to drive a nail, you won't use a driver in the sand or a wedge to drive a ball 250 yards.

THE RIGHT FIT

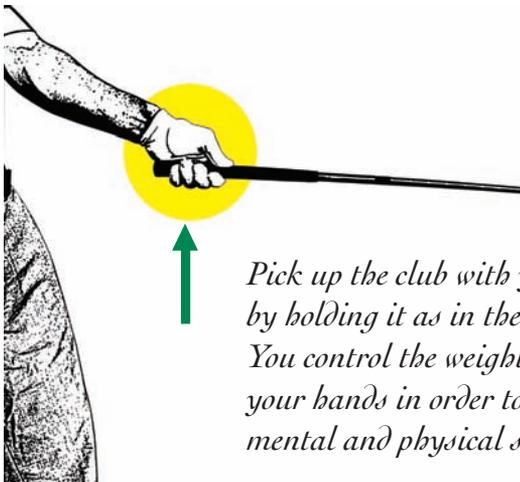
In addition to understanding the basic design principles of a golf club, it is imperative that you choose golf equipment that best fits you. For example, if you put new tires on a fine sports car, it will not run as well as it possibly can unless the tires are balanced. In the same way, there are so many opportunities in this day and age to have your golf clubs custom fit, that there is really no excuse if you do not take advantage of this option. Most major golf manufacturers have elaborate custom-fitting systems; club fitting is offered at local pro shops, golf superstores, and driving ranges.

Just as you seek comfort in your address and your golf moves, you should get equipment that is not only comfortable in your hands, but comfortable during the swing and personally pleasing to your eye. Custom fitters today can take lie, grip size, club head weight, type of shaft, and shaft length into consideration in a way that was only experienced by top professionals just a few short years ago. Don't be concerned about your changing swing as you adapt to the new teaching concepts presented in this book. Modern equipment is fitted more specifically to physical size than swing characteristics, so the equipment fitted to your "old" swing will, in most cases, still work with your "new" one.

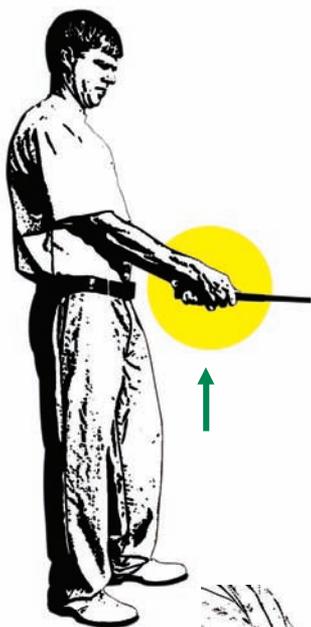
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THE RIGHT CONTROL

The right club and the right fit demands the right grip and control. Ben Hogan taught me the importance of gripping the golf club appropriately. When I was about 14 or 15, I asked Ben Hogan why everyone talked about holding the club lightly. Mr. Hogan answered, “Eben, I never said to hold it lightly; but to hold it like you’re holding a bird. Let me show you what I mean.” He shook my hand and I thought he was going to break it! Ben continued, **“You want to hold a bird with your fingers, not squeeze it with your palm, in order to hold it firmly without killing it. If you don’t control the golf club in your hands, you don’t control your shots.”**

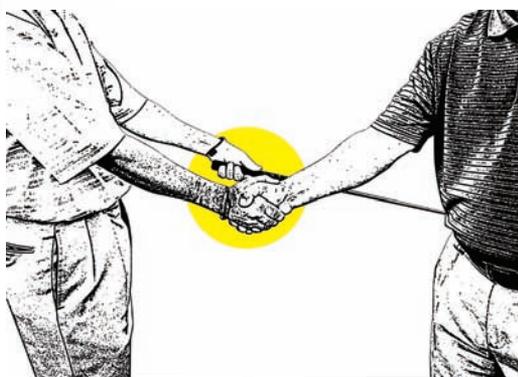


Pick up the club with your leading hand by holding it as in the illustration. You control the weight of the club in your hands in order to start the correct mental and physical sequence.



Now take control of the club with both hands. Stabilize the club with your fingers.

Your grip should be firm (or stable) and the rest of your body should be at ease (or unstable). This is what Hogan meant when he said “hold the club lightly”.



The hands should always feel like they are at a handshake distance from the body. This allows the body to be at ease while the hands control both the golf club and the body.

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Control in golf means having control over the entire weight of the golf club during the entire swing. Just as you must control a pencil in order to write with it, you must likewise maintain control over a golf club. Control over the club allows players to attain their desired outcome, which for the most part is accurate ball flight. Most amateurs lose control when they make contact with the ball. It doesn't take much thought to realize that the only body parts that control both the club and body motion simultaneously are the hands. The hands hold and swing the weight of the club. In the same way, your hands also control your body. By keeping the club well-balanced in the hands, good body control is promoted; this produces a balanced, coordinated, and free-flowing swing. Prior to and during the swing, focus on nothing but the efficient control of the club by the hands from take-away to finish. The rest of the body, if kept flexible, will automatically do what it needs to do to support the motion of the hands as they control the club.

Let me give you an example. When basketball players shoot free throws, they do not use just their hands. Their knees, shoulders, stomach, and elbows all play a role in the shot. Each body part follows and supports the hands as they control the basketball.

Basketball players do not shoot rigidly, focused only on using “big muscles” as so many golfers have been taught to do. They are loose, relaxed, and focused on their hands and the target. The best free-throw shooters also follow the same process each time and try to repeat their shooting technique over and over—the same relationship golfers have with a full swing.

Once you understand how the hands control the golf swing, you must learn how to employ them efficiently. The next time you are out on the golf course, try this exercise. Grip the club comfortably and balance it evenly, supported and controlled by the small muscles in the eight fingers of your two hands. Maintain this grip and balance from take-away to the completion of the follow-through. It should create a swing that is under control, without wasted or extra movement.

Later, once you’ve mastered giving your hands control, you will be able to adapt this technique to all your golf shots. The more control you feel and exhibit, the more confident you will be in your ability to hit any shot necessary.

“To play golf without feel would be like a deaf man trying to play the piano by ear”
Ben Hogan

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*The body should be comfortable
and ready to follow the hands.*

CHAPTER 2

Let Your Hands Lead the Way

Building on the concept in chapter 1 that your hands control the golf club, I want to expand the principle that as your hands lead (using small muscles), the rest of your body (and large muscle groups) will naturally follow, creating control and balance. Once you have successfully given control of the swing to your hands, you should be able to feel, recall, and repeat that golf swing.

When you walk, you don't think about having good balance or control. You don't think to yourself, "OK, left foot, move forward..." You simply start walking. Of course, the ability to walk without falling did not happen the minute you starting walking as a toddler. To walk with a steady gait required effort and practice. The same principle can apply to learning to let your hands have the freedom to lead and control your golf swing. It may not feel familiar at first, but with repetition, you'll get rid of past habits and then it will feel natural and comfortable (the way you always wanted it to feel).

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*Let the hands lead the feet to
create the proper sequence.*

When you focus on the hands as the center of balance and means of controlling your swing, the mind and body will support the movement willingly. Another way of putting it, is when the hands lead and control the club, the body follows and supports them as it clears the space for them to move freely. Let me illustrate this concept with an example. If I want to pick up a coffee cup on the opposite side of the table, I reach with my hand; my body follows the lead and moves to allow me to reach it. I don't think about moving my body; it just happens. When you apply the concept of controlling your golf swing with your hands and allowing your body to follow, you will make your most balanced and efficient swing, which in turn creates maximum power and accuracy.

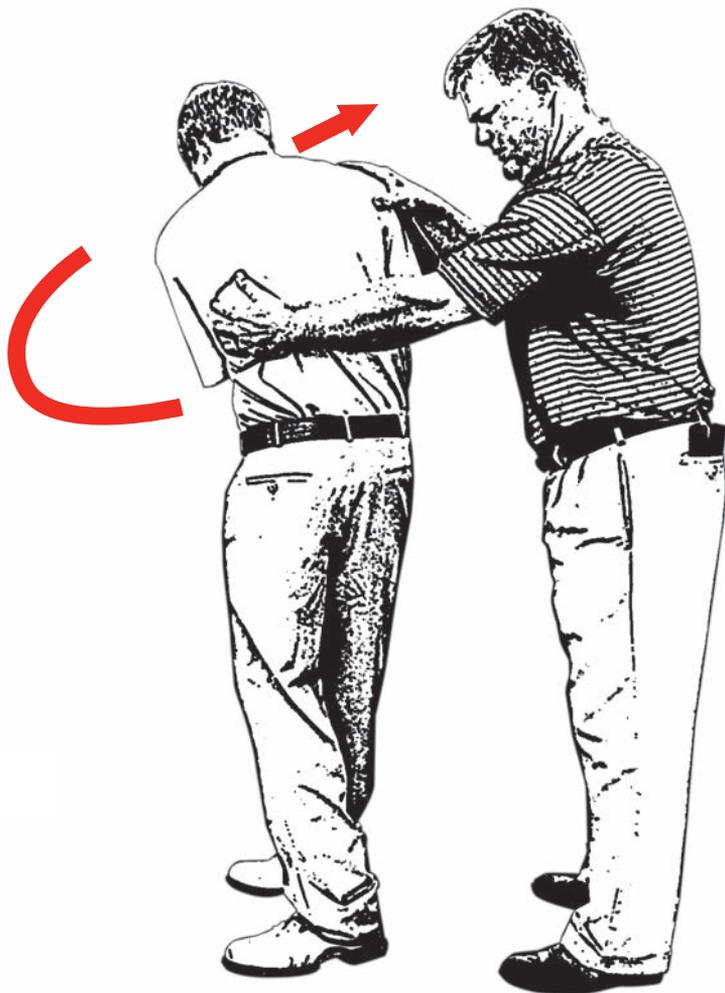
CONTROL WITH YOUR HANDS, THE REST WILL FOLLOW

You must maintain your hands as the center of balance and focus of your golf swing; otherwise, your swing will always be out of sequence and off-balance. Some current golf instruction theories suggest that the chest and/or abdomen areas are the center of balance, and should control the motion of the swing. If you do this, the hands and body will be in conflict, creating tension

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and destroying the power and velocity of the swinging motion. Instruction based on chest, abdomen, or any large muscle groups is why most golfers never achieve their true potential.

When larger muscles get involved, joints stop working and suddenly you're fighting all the old enemies of a free and balanced swing; resistance, rigidity, and disorder. In addition, when tension builds in the large muscles, fear exacerbates the problem promoting fear and doubt in the mind. When a golfer uses big muscles to steer a shot, they have impeded the natural flow of the hands. This may cause a golfer to "jump" or "lunge" into a swing while under duress without realizing what they're doing.



When done out of sequence, the torso or body pushes or leads the swing, the hands move in a circle and only perfect timing can save the outcome.

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On the other hand, when the hands control the club, balance is achieved, the body is “along for the ride”, and the mind has much less to focus on. Do not let “big muscles” jump in to create tension and conflict. Stay focused on the hands and their controlling powers. Once you’ve grasped this, you can begin to play your best with less mental and physical stress, because dynamic balance is a flowing, uninterrupted motion that maintains the sensation of balance and control from the beginning of the swing to the end. When you let your hands control your swing, they start the motion and the body follows in sequence. Balance and harmony are the results, producing a swing that looks and feels effortless yet produces power and accuracy.



When done correctly, the hands lead or pull, the body will follow. Then the hands can move in a relatively straight line back and forward.

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FEEL, DON'T SEE, YOUR GOLF SWING

In addition, I know golf instruction has become too complex and off-base because so many teachers are focused on describing the motion of a golf swing, and focused on “positions” players must “get into” during their swings. A golf swing is one flowing motion, not a series of checkpoints. Often, video is used to allow you to see where you are at certain points in your swing.

Instead, I want you to focus on how a golf swing feels - not what it looks like. A friend of mine once said, perhaps perfectly, “The description of the experience and the experience are two totally different things.” To maximize your experience, you must create harmony between the club and your hands, body, and mind. The feeling this creates will help produce an effortless golf swing.

This book is designed to help you feel what your mind perceives to be happening with your body, not to describe how the body works technically. Even if you understood how the body works, you wouldn't be able to single out more than just a couple of the actions in your golf swing. There would be much more technical information swimming through your mind than you could possibly process during the two seconds it takes to swing a club.

CHAPTER 2 - LET YOUR HANDS LEAD THE WAY

The pursuit of knowing how the golf swing works (from the technical and physical side) led to Nick Faldo's slide in the late 1990's. I worked with Nick in 2000, and we tried to eliminate his unnecessary thoughts. When we started, he took 80 seconds to go through his routine and hit a shot. No wonder he was ready to quit! In less than six weeks, we had eliminated so many of his pre-shot thoughts that he cut 60 seconds off his routine. He went from missing cuts to playing weekends again, and went on to finish seventh at the 2000 U.S. Open. Rather than concentrate on the technical aspects of his swing, the focus of our work together was to allow Nick to eliminate extraneous thoughts, focus his energy on his hands, and minimize resistance to them.

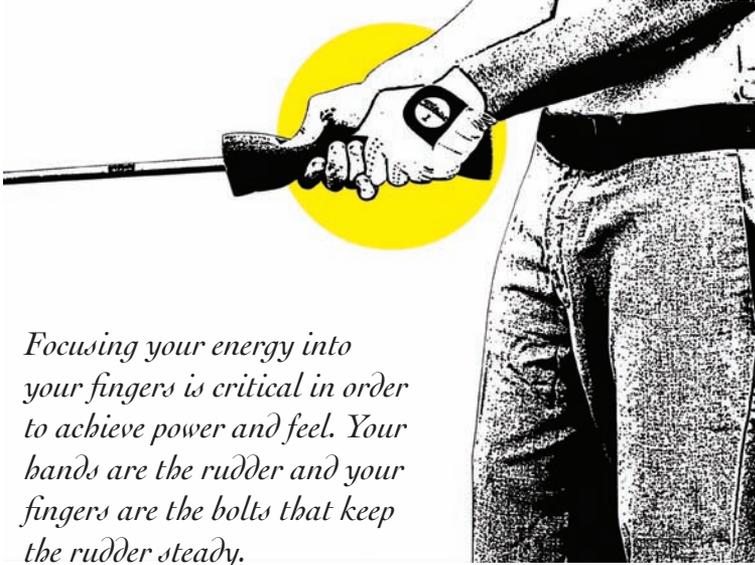
Like Faldo, players can become overly aware of their setup and swing appearance and lose touch with what a good swing feels like. Learn to concentrate your effort and energy on what's important. Instead of thinking about a complex body movement, simplify and focus your feel on the small muscles, and let the big muscles follow and support them. Focus on only one muscle group the small muscles of the hands, especially the fingers. Focus your energy on what should be in control (hands and muscles in the fingers) and pay little or no attention to what

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should be controlled by the hands (big muscles) so as not to destroy or block the motion of the active muscles, and therefore, the swing itself.

If you think of your hands as the rudder of the swing and your fingers are the bolts that hold the rudder together, then you can **keep the rudder secure by not letting the bolts come loose throughout the entire swing.**

Just as you allow your body to have a natural motion when you are walking down the street, allow your hands to have an uninterrupted motion or clear path when you're swinging!

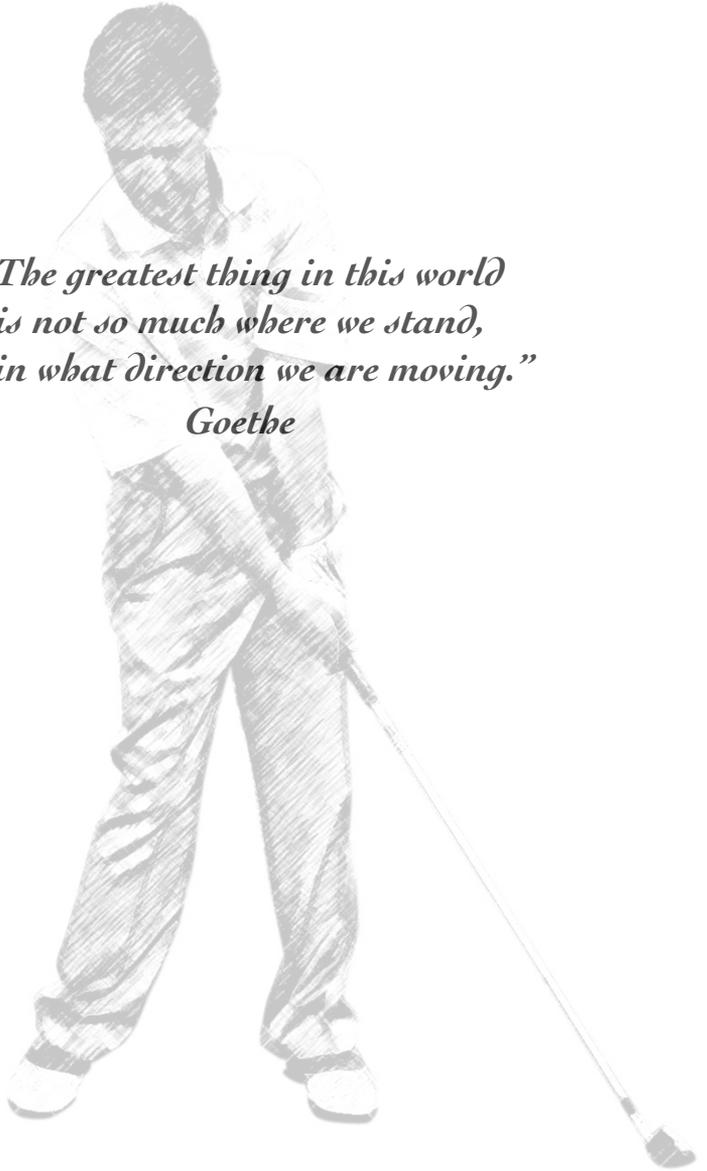


Focusing your energy into your fingers is critical in order to achieve power and feel. Your hands are the rudder and your fingers are the bolts that keep the rudder steady.

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*“The greatest thing in this world
is not so much where we stand,
as in what direction we are moving.”*

Goethe



CHAPTER 3

Create a Clear Path

The final outcome is created by you controlling the golf club with your hands and that your hands (not your body) lead the golf shot. The purpose of this chapter is to think about choosing a path for your hands during the golf swing that allows the golf ball to go where you want and how to keep that path clear until your swing is done.

STEP 1

Gather Information for the Hands

Before you choose a path for your hands, you must gather information. This is a simple process because your natural instincts do most of the work. You can feel the wind on your skin, the slope of the ground on the soles of your feet, and so on. From these common observations, you can determine from past experiences the needed shape, path, and speed of your hands through the swing. It all happens in a matter of seconds on a subconscious level. When we overanalyze information on a conscious level, we establish doubt about what comes naturally to us. Doubt then

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turns to fear, and we all know where that leads. It all comes back to keeping it simple and trusting your subconscious instinctive analytical processes. This is best accomplished with a clear, quiet, uncluttered mind. Let instincts, not thoughts, provide the informational input that guides your hands and determines the path you choose.

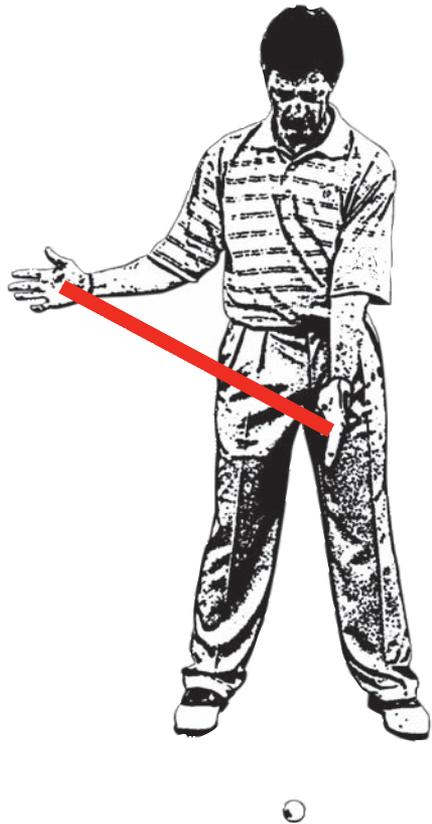
STEP 2

Choose a Path for the Hands

The path you need to choose for your hands depends on the type of shot you want to make. You have to take into consideration the desired loft, distance, and direction you want the golf ball to take. After you've gathered information about your environment as in step 1, you need to choose a path that seems right to you based on the club. The only thing you must do with the golf ball is to make sure it is in the way of your path; preferably near the middle of the path. Most amateur golfers place the ball at the end of their path or outside or inside of it; however, the most desirable spot is in the middle of the path.

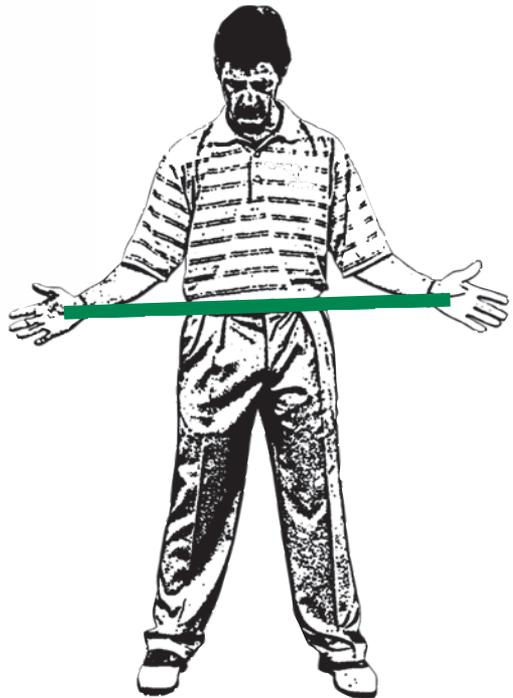
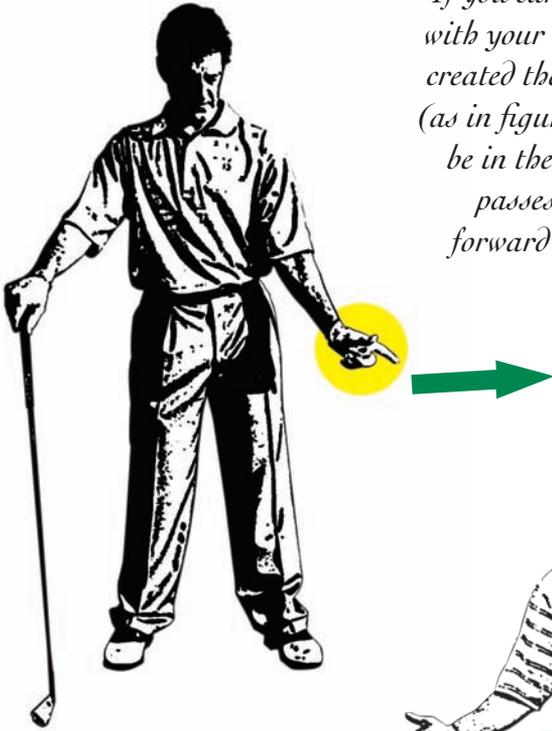


Focusing your energy toward the ball or the club head (as in figure to left), changes the path of your hands. The result is that the ball sits at the end of the path (figure below) rather than the middle of the path.



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If you can easily point to your target with your leading forefinger, you have created the ideal space for your hands (as in figure on left), and the ball will be in the direct path of the club as it passes from the back swing to the forward swing. This will maximize power and feel.



STEP 3

Keep the Path Clear Until the Swing is Done

Once you've determined a path for your hands and shot, you must clear that path with your body and mind. In other words, you do not want to impede your swing with your body or second guess your choice mid-swing. The first thing you must decide when preparing your hands for a given shot is, "How will I balance the weight of the club in my fingers for the upcoming shot?" With information for the hands already collected and transferred, the grip should come naturally on the club as you focus on the hands being the center of control with the club's weight distributed in your fingers. Once you focus on your hands, position them on the path that you've already selected for the shot you want to create and they will lead your body into a ready position.

Once you are in position, with the body supporting the hands' position, look at your target once more, make any needed weight distribution or rudder adjustments, then consider yourself ready. Your feet will naturally shuffle to a position to support the intended path of your hands. The primary purpose of the ready position (i.e., setup) is to put the hands in place to carry the club on an efficient path toward the target.

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If you are in a position to positively support the hands, you should feel you're standing comfortably and "ready" – not so much like a linebacker awaiting the snap, but more like a pitcher waiting for a signal from the catcher with a runner on first – hand engaged with the ball and ready to move, but still at ease. This position of readiness allows for a swing with a natural flow, the primary focus being the hands' path and the control they maintain over the weight of the club while guiding the body.

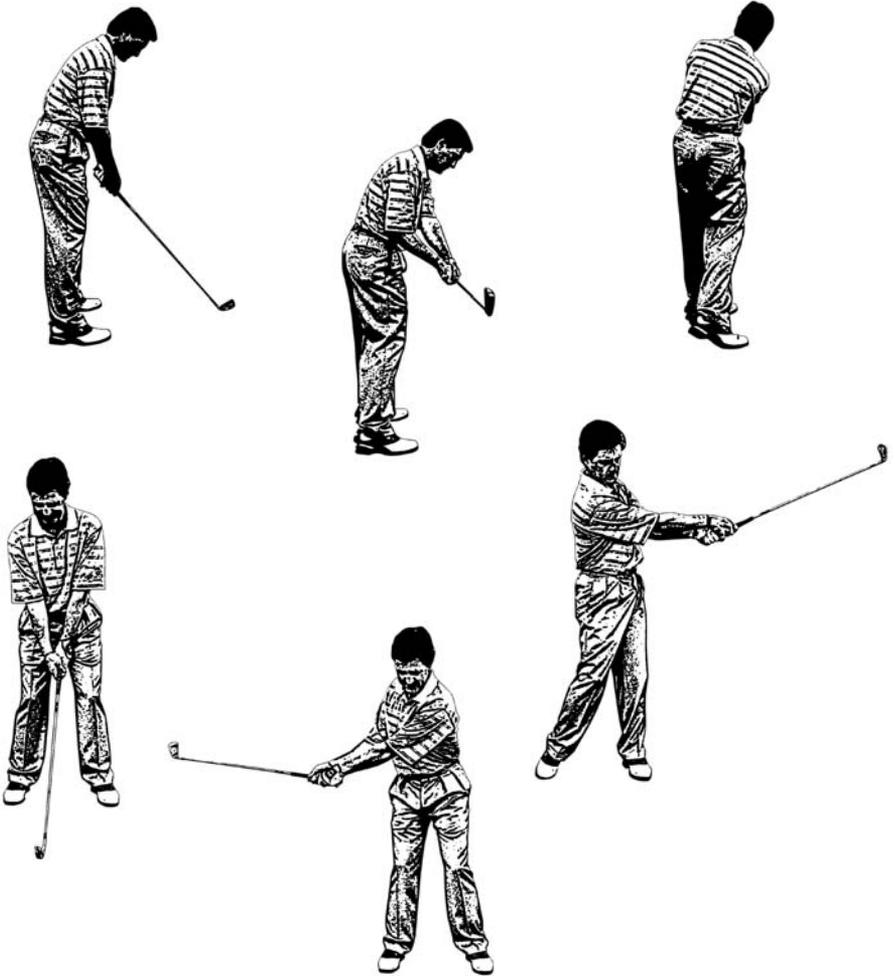
It won't take long to figure out how to distribute the weight of the club in the fingers for maximum efficiency and control. It will be evenly distributed based on the shot you need to play. The ball will always go where the hands go, good or bad, so place the ball in the way of where you really want to go. **Your hands act as a rudder steering the body and golf club, just as a rudder on a boat steers the boat.** That leads us back, once again, to the bedrock principle that the hands' clear path should be the only focus. The less we have to think about, the better our performance. Another way to focus your attention would be to see your hands as the rudder, and the fingers as the bolts that hold the rudder together.

Once you have put the hands in a position to control the weight of the club by using your fingers like bolts to lock in the rudder,

the final phase of execution is to put your focus into keeping the rudder steady from start to finish of the swing. By keeping a constant pressure in the bolts and rudder, your shot making will become consistent and predictable. To do this, you must keep your mind clear of all unnecessary thoughts (see chapter 4). Now is when your faith in the process will be tested. It is easy to let the mind add thoughts and create doubt and worry over what might go wrong with the swing and/or the outcome of the shot, which will engage the wrong muscles and create a loss of sequence and balance. Always remember, the simpler the better. This book's purpose is to help players break the game down to a simple ball-and-stick game, in order to develop and enjoy an effortless, efficient, powerful golf swing, and play to your best simultaneously.

*“We cannot spend excessive time
trying to understand everything.
We must simply act upon our instincts.”*

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When the hands are allowed to lead and control, the body will follow in correct sequence. This creates a clear and easy path for the hands.

CHAPTER 4

Out With the Old, In With the New

My local newspaper publishes an annual golf section, and on one cover was an illustration of a golfer using the full motion of his swing. Surrounding him were different thoughts players might allow to creep in to their minds in the short time it takes to make that full swing. It was confusing and overwhelming, but familiar. Many players know the feeling—standing at address and trying to sort through all the potential thoughts to find the one that might work this time. Ironically, the section focused on instruction! In my opinion, all of these thoughts need to be eliminated, not taught or encouraged. Just as the last chapter talked about clearing the path for your hands, your mind must be clear of detrimental thoughts of outside influences and freed of old habits that prevent you from following the process described in this book. Therefore, the goal of this chapter is twofold 1) to isolate and eliminate unnecessary past thoughts and habits, and 2) to reiterate the basic process of a good golf swing and trusting your instincts.

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OUT WITH THE OLD

The first thing one must do to eliminate unnecessary thoughts is to remove focus on the outside influences in your environment. For example, think less about what your buddies may be thinking about your shot and the outcome of your shot (the results) and think more about the process of the swing (the cause).

In addition to eliminating outside environmental interferences, rid yourself of bad habits. How does one purge himself of bad habits? First, you need to realize what habits and routines you follow. To understand your habits, you might begin by writing down a list of any thoughts that tend to shape your routine, such as concern for a straight left arm, bending of the knees, keeping your head down, cocking your wrists during the back swing, turning your shoulders, loading your weight on the right side, etc. All of these thoughts take control away from the hands and create conflict in the swing via tension in the body.



*Tension occurs when the focus is on
the ball instead of the hands.*

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For every old thought or technique you have been trained to use, you can determine their value by asking yourself if they help or hurt you from getting your desired results. Challenge yourself to really evaluate whether the thoughts and habits you have developed improve your golf swing or impede your progress. So, look at your list and ask yourself, “Do these thoughts or habits promote an effortless, balanced swing on a clear path or do they restrict the golf swing? Do these techniques that I’m trying to use feel comfortable? Do they help me hit the golf ball farther and straighter?” If the answer is “no”, these thoughts are of no value and should be purged from your routine. For example, if you are attempting to “swing with a straight left arm”, you must lock your left elbow (presuming you are a right-handed golfer) This technique makes a flexible joint (your elbow) inflexible and takes away freedom of motion from the hands. With this predominant thought, your mind will automatically add more thoughts in an effort to get the body to do what it is not willing to do naturally. The results are conflict, restriction, and tension. In this case, the big muscles in the arms and shoulders take focus and control away from the hands, leading to a swing that’s out of sequence. Then the ball can’t travel on the path you have chosen, which, in turn, destroys the outcome you desired. In addition, focusing on large

muscle groups to make a golf shot keeps you from swinging freely and playing consistent golf and, as previously discussed, creates a swing that is out of sequence.

IN WITH THE NEW

Now that you've eliminated thoughts and techniques that are detrimental to your natural swing, you must replace those thoughts with those that add value to your golf game. The first part is to remember the basic steps to a good golf swing.

1. Understand the golf club – how it is built and designed to work.
2. Control the club in your hands.
3. Know the path your golf swing should take.
4. Clear that path.
5. Use the path that is clear – don't force it.
6. Use your instinct and trust that you've chosen the right path.

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TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS—LESS IS BEST

The next thing to remember is that sometimes in golf, less is best. Usually, trusting your instincts rather than analyzing a golf swing produces superior results. The beginning golfer has little or no past experience to call upon. But, in some ways, the beginner has an advantage in that he or she can only trust their instincts. A player with a plethora of knowledge and experiences has learned to override instincts. The temptation is to add variables, detracting from the ability to define the obvious. You may have heard this condition described as “paralysis by analysis”. As in the last chapter, you want to evaluate your environment, gather information for your hands, clear the path, and use the clearest path. Even though you gather information from your environment, you should allow your instincts to know and react to what the information means. In other words, don’t overanalyze your shots. Don’t say “It’s 179 yards to the flag; I need X club and must swing at a speed of X miles per hours...” Allow your instincts to dictate your swing so you can feel the shot. One might say that you have to “give up control to gain control”.

You have been told that golf is a technical game, but it is really just a game of feelings. To focus on technical details simply

puts your mind on results, not the cause. Focus on gathering information for the purpose of the hands controlling the club and the swing and the body supporting both. You don't need to be perfect when gathering information. When you try too hard or take too long, you allow unwanted thoughts to creep into your thought process, giving doubt and fear an opportunity to affect your hands' path. Don't rush the process; think only of the feel of the hands controlling the club on a clear path during the swing. It won't take much time, and if done calmly, it increases the probability of executing the intended swing and producing the desired result. In doing so, you will keep the information simple and not override the instincts which allow feel of a clear path for your hands to be your primary focus.

Remember, your instincts are just that. They gather, process, and use information in different ways than your analytical mind, which is limited to one thought at a time. Our instincts can deal with untold numbers of variables in an instant, but our conscious mind – and indeed, even the most powerful computer in the world – cannot come close to matching it.

In summary, don't waste time and energy trying to understand everything about the golf swing. Simply act on your instincts and

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stay on track by keeping your mind on what is important. The fewer thoughts you have, the better. If you stay committed to your hands and let them lead and control the sequence of the swing, you'll be less susceptible to all outside influences. When you employ this simple physical and mental approach, golf will become easier and more fun.

*“You can struggle against the current of life.
Or, you can find your current and go with it.”*
Oprah Winfrey

CHAPTER 5

Simplicity Training for the Mind

It's one thing to say "clear your mind" and "focus only on your hands." It's harder to accomplish. The mind naturally wants to interfere and add unnecessary thoughts. Probably the most difficult aspect of this method is training the mind to stay clear and focused on what is important. Chapter 4 focused on clearing your mind of outside influences and past habits. This chapter will teach you three basic questions on which to focus your attention, emphasize suppressing inner thoughts that negatively influence your golf swing, and help you learn to use your "inner" eyes.

THE THREE QUESTIONS

With each distracting thought, you add another obstacle to your physical and mental obstacle course. If your mind is clear and focused, your swing will be unobstructed and flow with balance. As in an old Bob Seger song, "the answer is in the question", you can create a clear mental path by focusing your attention only on these three simple "yes or no" questions.

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1. "Have I chosen a path for my hands?"
2. "Have I cleared that pathway from the ground up?"
3. After the shot, "Did I use the path that was open, did my bolts stay constant during the swing?"

Asking these questions keep you attentive to the basic process espoused by this book. Eventually these three questions will instead become three subconscious statements

1. "There is my path."
2. "The path is clear."
3. "I used my clear path and stayed focus on maintaining my constant bolts in order to keep the rudder steady."

ELIMINATING NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

Even if you focus on these three simple questions, it's easy for other thoughts to wander into your mind. Our minds work very quickly; just ask someone who admittedly has a short-attention span. We can move from our intended focus to something completely off-task in a split second. You must constantly practice keeping your train of thought during each step. The smart players are the ones that realize this is the key to success, and they constantly work to improve their ability to focus on a

process single-mindedly.

The two most prevalent distractions to a routine are negative thoughts and fears; particularly “outcome-related” thoughts such as direction, acceleration, hitting the ball, etc., and big-muscle thoughts from your past golf life that work against focus on the hands.

To this day, I continue to work on eliminating or suppressing negative thoughts that creep in from past experiences. They distract me from focusing on my hands and their control. There’s that little voice inside me that wants to remind me of all my past failures, especially on difficult and important shots. I know it is only my mind adding extra thoughts, sabotaging my chances for success. Yet, I know it is natural, and requires mental retraining. I – we – must recognize negative thoughts and let them pass. Regain your positive thought process by starting with the foundation – focus on the hands, their control, and the three basic questions.

Eventually, you will be able to minimize or eliminate thoughts getting in the way of your positive routine. The closer your thoughts come to the being the same each time – especially during the ready position and swing – the more consistent you will be. When your

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new conscious commands, override your subconscious habits, then you will achieve your desired results.

USING YOUR INNER EYES

The other part of training your brain is learning to feel the control of the club through your hands, instead of trying to physically observe hand position at different points during the swing. To simplify, we will call it the difference between using the inner eyes and using the visual eyes. Most golfers have been trained to use their visual eyes to focus on variables such as ball position in relation to the feet, clubface alignment, square hips or shoulders, and so on. Focusing on all these visual thoughts take you away from feeling control and efficiency by the hands during the swing. It's the same as trying to keep a cup of tea or coffee still while looking at it, or pointing your finger at something while attempting to keep your finger perfectly still. You will see that the more visual attention you pay to each task, the more the cup and your finger begin to quiver and shake. The way to perform these simple tasks most efficiently is to use your inner eye, or natural instincts, for balance and support between the hands and body.

CHAPTER 5 - SIMPLICITY TRAINING FOR THE MIND

The other way to state this concept is that the more you become aware of your hands internally, and the less you focus on them visually, your mind will become clear and you'll be more at ease. Think about it this way when you complete other tasks, you don't concentrate on the tools you're using. If you're eating, you don't focus on the fork and how you are bringing it to your mouth. You are thinking about your hunger, the taste of the food, and maybe the conversation at the table. It is by instinct that you raise the fork to your mouth. Why then, would it seem appropriate to focus precisely on the golf ball or club during your golf swing?

A great technique for training your mind to focus on feeling rather than seeing is to concentrate on your breathing. Take some deep breaths in through your nose and notice whether you inhale into your chest or into your diaphragm. If you learn to concentrate on your breathing for up to ten minutes without thinking of anything else, you are training yourself to focus on simple thoughts. Here's another great exercise for training yourself to feel the feedback from your inner eyes. Stand on your tiptoes with your feet together and stretch your arms out in front of you. Close your eyes and try to stay balanced for as long as you can. At first you will probably be able to do it for only a few seconds. As you practice it, your

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balance will become better and you'll be able to balance for an extended period. You are training yourself to feel what creates and maintains your balance and how the weight of your body is distributed across your toes.

In summary, you can't control everything, but you can control your mind. Keep it simple by improving your natural instincts to control the club while swinging with your hands, and learn to use your inner eyes.

“The less I think, the happier I am.”

CHAPTER 6

A Clear Path to Shotmaking and the Short Game

Because this golf philosophy preaches a single process with a focus on a clear path for the hands, one might wonder if these principles apply to all golf shots. The answer is an emphatic yes! This book is designed to empower you with the mental and physical tools to be able to make a basic golf swing and to provide general guidelines to produce different shots. We'll not get into a step-by-step breakdown of how to approach or execute every conceivable shot. Regardless of the circumstances, these shots should not baffle players. They are simply a smaller version of the full swing. This chapter will allow you to understand how the one basic process we have been discussing applies to all golf shots.

SHOTMAKING

If you allow your thoughts to focus only on the process described in this book, you will only have to determine the shape and path along which the hands control the club to create the desired shot, whether high and drawing, low and fading, etc. You already know, instinctively and through previous experiences, that to

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produce a high shot, the path of the hands go up and finish high at the end of the swing, while the hands' path finishes lower on a low trajectory shot – much in the same manner hands manipulate a tennis ball through the racket. This is most easily achieved by controlling the club correctly before starting the swing, and maintaining its constant control during the swing.

Once you start to understand there are six basic paths you can combine (left, right, or straight with high, low, or straight), you will also be able to figure out how to control the club in your hands to produce different shots. It's what Demaret meant when he said "I just feel the shot and go there." The accompanying video illustrates more clearly how to achieve different shots.

THE SHORT GAME

The basis of the golf philosophy presented in this book is that the basic steps (control the club with your hands, determine a path for the hands, clear the path for the hands, and keep that path clear throughout the swing) apply no matter what type of shot you are attempting to make. To this point, we have discussed how focus on the hands can help the full swing. However, these principles also apply around and on the green.

CHAPTER 6 - A CLEAR PATH TO SHOTMAKING AND THE SHORT GAME

Your primary focus in the short game remains to allow the hands to control the club. The difference is that the hands travel a shorter distance and/or at a slower pace than they do for a long drive. However, the hands still control the club and lead the swing. The most common flaw I see in the short games of the average golfer is losing control of the club by relaxing to slow their hands primarily because they become focused on “hitting” the ball or controlling the outcome and allowing their path to end at the ball. The body responds by becoming more rigid and the hands lose control. Just as with the full swing, the hands should start and lead the sequence. A rigid body won’t let the hands control the swing. The more tension, control, or resistance in the body, the less energy and control are in the hands. Putting can account for about half of your shots, and it is not exempt from our techniques. The key to putting is to place your hands in the position that produces the least amount of resistance, allowing the hands to freely lead and control the stroke. Usually the putter is the shortest club in the bag; therefore, it will be closer to your body. Again, just as with a full swing or any other shot, the body should be positioned to support the control of the hands from start to finish. If the body is too rigid, too close, or too far from the hands, the hands will not control the putter.

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Experiment with how to control the putter in your hands and determine the path of least resistance. The main concept is to take focus away from the ball or club position and put it on the hands' control of the club from start to finish. Forget old tips like positioning your eyes over the ball, squaring the putter face, accelerating through the ball, and so on. These thoughts will crowd and confuse your mind and body and diminish the control of the hands.

Control the club on a clear path and the ball will simply be in the way. Your hands will always pass back through where they started unless you interfere with their control. You are not hitting the ball. The ball will go where the hands send it, or in other words, the ball will follow in the path of the hands (good or bad). Concentrate your focus and energy on the dominance and control of the hands. Once you learn to keep the hands in control and you become more aware of the feeling, you will find all the other so-called putting fundamentals occurring naturally and you will quickly adapt to all different conditions. By this I mean you will be able to see the path for the hands to create the shot/chip/putt through natural instincts, feel the clear path of the shot/chip/putt through your hands, and execute without hesitation or doubt.

CHAPTER 6 - A CLEAR PATH TO SHOTMAKING AND THE SHORT GAME

Remember to trust your instincts, focus on your hand's control, and think about what you are feeling through them. This process prevents fear and doubt which can cause hesitation or produce resistance to the hands' clear path. These principles should improve both your long and short game.

*“A route of many roads leads from
nowhere to nothing.”
Ambrose Bierce*

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*“In order to remove the negative,
you have to focus on the positive.”*



CHAPTER 7

Feeling is Believing

Once you've been successful with choosing and executing the correct path, you want to remember how that felt so that you can repeat the experience. How many times have you hit a good shot and said to yourself, "Boy, I wish I knew what I did to make that happen!" That's what this chapter is about—relying on what a good shot feels like (not what it looks like) so you can repeat it.

You now know about keeping things simple in the mind by making control of the clear path with your hands your only thought. You realize instinctive feel should be allowed to win out over mechanical thoughts. It's the difference between feel-based learning and methods based on visual aids and descriptions to depict a "proper" swing.

Feel is compromised or destroyed through information overload when describing a golf swing in technical terms. The brain can't communicate multiple instructions to the body in the two seconds or less that it takes to make a golf swing. Also, what your body feels and what your eyes see are two totally different things. How often have you taken what you felt was a half-swing, but your

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playing partners are still asking you why you're taking the club back so far?

Most golf instruction is based on visual feedback rather than physical feeling. Compared with physical feeling, visual feedback often creates conflict between the mind and the body, which is why the average golfer looks mechanical and awkward. It's likely he or she is physically incapable of achieving the unnatural positions they're being asked to assume by classic instruction. It's easy to spot a golfer that uses feel over mechanics because when they have a clear path for their hands, the swing appears smooth, generating distance and accuracy.

Tour players who rely on mechanics, timing the exchange of leading the swing between the body and the hands, have come as close as possible to perfecting a move that is almost impossible for the average player to repeat. However, this technique also has a great tendency to let even the pros down in the clutch. They get away with it more often than amateurs because they have practiced it enough for it to be semi-reliable. Even those players could benefit from understanding and utilizing control through the hands.

CHAPTER 7 - FEELING IS BELIEVING

One of the greatest golfers of all time understood the concept of “feeling” the golf shot. Sam Snead focused on what the swing felt like – not its mechanical aspects – and how to control the weight of the club to produce a certain type of shot. This allowed Snead’s swing to be smooth and powerful, and he was able to produce many different kinds of shots. When Snead was asked how to hit a high fade, he said “I think high fade.” Asked about a draw, he responded “I think draw.” His smooth swing also produced considerable distance despite the obvious equipment limitations of his time. Snead was not called “The Slammer” by accident.

Ben Hogan is another example of a golfer who understood the need to feel the golf swing. He practiced only on feel and the hands’ relationship with the club. He wanted to make sure the sensation of controlling the club with the hands was ingrained in his soul so that it would not let him down in the hottest of battles. His book *Ben Hogan’s Five Lessons The Modern Fundamentals of Golf*¹ was really just a description of his swing, not what he was thinking or feeling. Hogan was no fool; he wasn’t going to give away his “secret.”

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WHAT IS YOUR SECRET?

One way to understand your success is to keep track of how your good swings feel as you execute them during a round. Ask yourself whether your hands controlled the club and swung on a clear path, or if you added unnecessary thoughts that altered it. In other words, after each shot, think about what you thought about before and during the shot. With practice, you will be able to narrow your focus down to the hands' control and clear path.

The main purpose of feedback is to catalog the different paths in which the club can move (which creates different shots), and your thought process prior to the shot. The path of the hands and how the club was controlled determines the shape and spin of the shot. So pay attention to the feedback from your hands after every shot. If you hit a poor shot and realize afterward that your focus was somewhere other than your hands, your hands were not controlling the club properly, or the path of your hands was impeded, that is part of the process. You will eventually develop the habit of focusing on your hands' clear path before, during, and after every shot.

In summary, learn to feel your shots, remember how the good shots felt, and try to replicate those shots in the future.

*“What we see depends mainly on what we look for”
Sir John Lubbock*

CHAPTER 8

The One Thought

We have established that control of the club, and therefore the swing, is centered in the hands and should be the single thought you will use to produce your best results in any circumstance. Making the transition from mechanical thoughts to feel is one of the toughest adjustments a golfer can make. But work at it. Mechanics will eventually break down, even if it's just once or twice a round. Most likely they will fail you at a time when you can ill-afford a mistake the most. At that point, you'll tend to fall back on old methods and keys to pull yourself out of a bad round. Those old keys might work for the rest of that round. But next time out, you'll find you aren't getting the same results from the same keys. That is why the one thought you must have is about the most effective process of swinging the golf club.

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ONE THOUGHT – ONE PROCESS

The one thought is really a series of steps. To make the most effective golf swing process, you must

1. Understand the golf club – how it is built and designed to work.
2. Control the club in your hands.
3. Know the path your hands should take.
4. Clear that path.
5. Use the path that is clear – don't force it.
6. Use your instinct and trust that you've chosen the right path.

If you move away from this process to try to find the magic fix for the day, the new fix will work only until you make a poor swing. Then you will lose confidence in that thought and move on to another. Even the pros get caught up in thinking they have found the secret one day to only discover what worked yesterday lets them down the next day. Also, when you move away from thinking about the process of the golf swing, unwanted fears or thoughts appear out of nowhere. Thoughts like “don't hit it in the water” or “are you sure you've chosen the right club” and so on distract you from focusing on the control of the club by the hands and choosing and following a clear path. Recognize this when it happens. Go ahead and start your routine over, or wait until the thought passes; then get back to focusing on your primary thought.

CHAPTER 8 - THE ONE THOUGHT

If you could ask touring pros what they're thinking about when they are playing well, most will say something like "nothing" or "not much," and you know they're not kidding! They're literally "feeling it" – feeling the swing required for a given shot. They aren't consciously thinking about feel as their swing thought. They're thinking results and trusting their processes and feel to produce them.

Remember – the reason most, if not all of you, are reading this book is because you know you are capable of playing better golf but are not improving as much as you'd like under your current circumstances. You are as frustrated as I was before I understood the role of the hands, focus, and control. It stands to reason that you aren't getting results from your current methods. You're willing to try something different, and compared with most contemporary teachings, this method certainly qualifies. So, make your one thought the process of playing golf not golf swing and start improving your golf game.

*"The devil is in the details."
Unknown*

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*“You won’t be able to change your actions
until you can change your mind.”*



CHAPTER 9

Putting it all Together

Reducing golf to the ball-and-stick game it is was difficult for me. Outside of the subconscious effect from watching Hogan practice and conversations with Demaret and Champions' Golf Club co-owner Jackie Burke, I grew up around conventional thought and instruction. Finding the one point of focus upon which a clear mind could be centered was a complete change in the thought process to which I'd become accustomed.

It is my opinion that golf was created for enjoyment and to pass time, not necessarily to measure one's ability to handle mental and physical strain. That, to a certain extent, is a by-product of competition, whether it is with oneself, the course, or others. I hope this book is your personal guide to freedom – freedom from your doubts and fears, freedom to play with grace and confidence. Your clear mind and honed focus has paved the way, and will likely help you to improve other aspects of your life.

The idea of using a single process to control an outcome is not new or revolutionary. It is employed by self-help groups and championed by spiritual books. Yet it has not been applied to golf in this manner, such as we have considered the hands' role as the center of focus and leader/controller of the golf swing.

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I have tried to make it clear that the most important thought is to focus your mental and physical energy on the hands. The mind's foremost thought is to use the hands to control the selected shot. The role of the body is to support, not resist, the motion of the hands as they control and carry the club.

To accomplish this, the mind must be at rest or calm, not busy or crowded. When the mind is trained to stay tuned to the hands' control, the body will become more supportive of their action. You must allow your singular thinking to train the body to follow and support the hands. If the time comes when you find yourself getting off-course, review the chapters discussing the process of quieting the mind and removing excess thoughts.

You have also learned to put the hands in a position that will allow them to control the body while moving efficiently. Do not disrupt the hands' path with the body. This will create conflict and destroy the dynamic balance, rhythm, and control the hands have over the club and the ultimate outcome.

This book gives you the one process needed for your best golf, but YOU are still responsible for discovering what the proper mental and physical process feels like to you. However, I am convinced your game will improve and peak in direct correlation to your

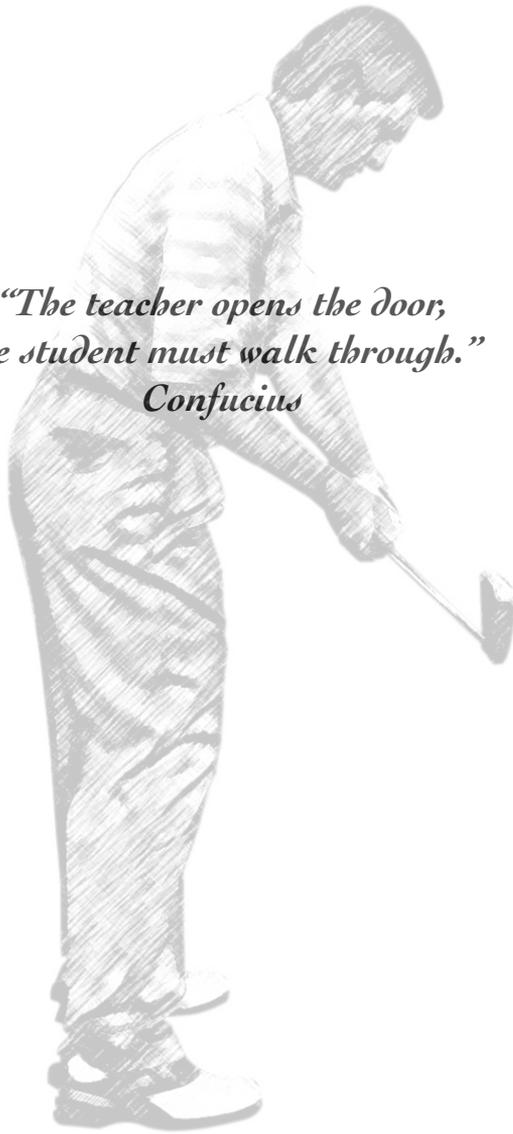
CHAPTER 9 - PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

ability to maintain focus on these teachings. The real secret is your ability to narrow your focus to only what is needed to create the outcome you desire. This book is designed to help you discover how gifted your mind and body really are. You can find your path to great golf and experience *power feel golf*.

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*“The teacher opens the door,
the student must walk through.”*

Confucius



APPENDIX

Suggested Mental and Physical Exercises

Alternate Strategy for Scoring Your Game on the Golf Course
“Cuts and Scrapes” is a strategic golf scoring game developed by the late Ted Ball. “Cuts and Scrapes” teaches a golfer to focus on the process of the shot at hand and, in effect, trains staying in the moment. The player scores

- 1 point for hitting a fairway,
- 1 point for hitting the green in regulation,
- 1 point for being closest to the pin,
- 1 point for a birdie, and
- 1 point for an up-and-down save for par.

There are 2 versions. The first version only allows addition of points (no subtraction); this version is typically played by junior golfers. The second version is as described above; however, players may also lose points. The player subtracts 1 point each time he/she leaves a putt short, scores a double bogey or worse, or takes more than two putts on the green.

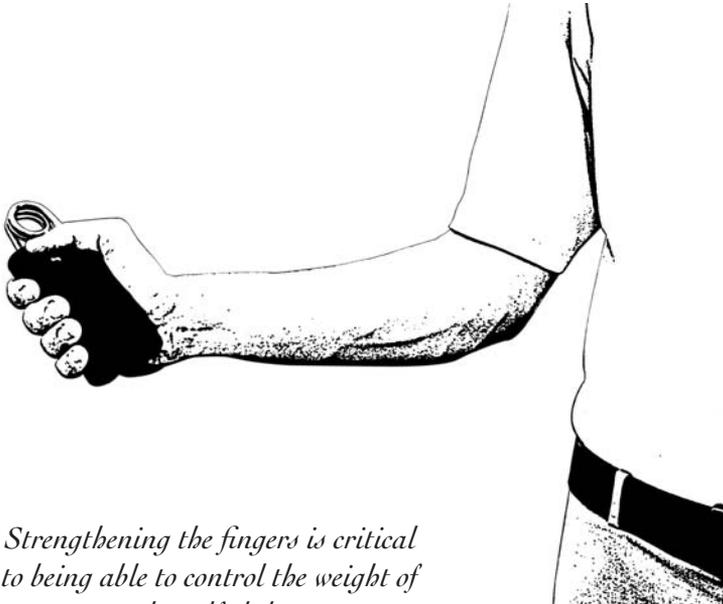
The great thing about the “positive points only” version is that when a golfer plays so poorly on one hole that it would normally

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ruin the day's score, he/she will still stand up on the next tee and think about hitting a fairway to score a point.

You can incorporate the strategy learned from this book to the "Cuts and Scrapes" game. Add 1 point every time you have a positive thought or complete your swing process as outlined in your book. Subtract a point each time you have a negative thought or fail to follow the correct swing process.

GOLF-RELATED EXERCISES



Strengthening the fingers is critical to being able to control the weight of the golf club.

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Use an exercise band to strengthen and increase the range of motion in your rotator cuffs.

