

Back To Basics

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Sometimes we spend so much time on the intricate parts of the swing and game we forget about the most basic stuff and even for good players that can hurt your game. In this article we'll look at two of the most basic yet important parts of the swing: how we grip the club and where we position the ball.

Both can have dramatic effects on how well we hit the ball and it's worth spending some time experimenting with some of these different things to see what it does for your game.

GRIP

We'll start with the grip because this is the only thing that connects us to the club. The function of the grip is to get both hands as close as possible to work as a unit, preventing the dominant hand taking over.

To provide the player with as much feel as possible, the grip needs to be soft or

relaxed. To say there is one grip better than the other would be incorrect. There are many touring professionals that play successfully with all variations of the grip. The only significant change to the three grips is the index finger in the left hand and pinky figure in the right hand (opposite for left handed players).

In my opinion, a player can have the best grip in the world but if their body shape is incorrect, that grip will not help their game.

There are three variations of the grip and each can have an effect on how we hit the ball. The most important thing to keep in mind when choosing which grip you'll use, though, is comfort. If you're comfortable with it, it's most likely the right grip for you.

PIC 1: Ten finger or baseball grip: This is often the grip people start with as it's the most instinctive way to pick up the club.

PIC 2: Interlocking: The grip favoured by Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus to name just two, and probably the second most popular variation.

PIC 3: Overlapping or Vardon grip: Popularised by the great player of the



Pic 1



Pic 2

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same name. This is the most used grip of all but that doesn't necessarily mean it's the right one for you.

Ball Position

Moving the ball around in the stance in relation to the body can have major influences on what sort of flight you achieve.

PIC 4: The FORWARD ball position is saved for driver, fairway metals, hybrids or long irons. These clubs need to sweep the ball as close to the bottom of the swing arc as possible which is towards the front foot in the swing. Unless you are trying to hit a high shot or down wind, the forward ball position should not move in front of the left heel.

PIC 5: The ball position in the MIDDLE of your stance will promote downward pressure on the ball, squeezing it out with authority. Mid and short irons are played from this position to encourage the downward blow required to compress the ball with these clubs.

PIC 6: The ball in the BACK of the stance is for low ball flights (when you need to manufacture a shot from under trees, for example) and chip and run shots beside greens. It is very much for specialty shots but can be of great value if you can master it.

One of the great things about the basics of the game is you can experiment with them. Next time you're at the range try hitting 10 balls with each of the three

different grips and see if you can notice a difference. You might be surprised how it feels.

After you've done that muck around with your ball position to see what effect that has on your ball flight. You might discover you've been playing the ball too far forward or back or that you just prefer the contact with the ball in a certain spot.

No matter what you discover, it will all contribute to your learning about the game



Pic 3



Pic 4



Pic 5



Pic 6