



John H. Morris



Wrong and right posture in addressing the ball. Stooping over and arching the back puts an unnecessary strain there and causes tightening up of both arms and legs. A straight back affords the position for a smooth swing

SIMPLIFY THOUGHT AND ACTION

Coordination of Hands, Arms, Body and Legs by Thinking of How the Swing Is Made Is Most Essential

By ALEX J. MORRISON

“HOLD ON! What’s on your mind? As you step up to hit the ball, which are you thinking about, the execution of the shot or the outcome of it?”

When the new season opens the golfer naturally asks himself, “I wonder if I’ll play any better this year than I did last year?” The question is a perennial puzzler.

The results that most players get on their first rounds of the season are generally very encouraging, in fact they often play around in figures that compare favorably with the best scores they have ever made. When they come think of it, it seems too good to last and it seldom does.

Following the natural looseness that characterizes his initial attempts, there comes a time when the player is not so sure of himself; his scores begin to mount, and he finds that even his favorite club is going back on him. As his game becomes worse the player looks about seeking the cause of his failure. This search brings him to a teacher or at least brings to his mind some of the instructions he has already received.

Instructions can be helpful or they can be harmful according to what the instructions happen to be and how they are carried

out. I’ve heard many a player complain “I’m between the devil and the deep sea, I don’t know which is worse. trying to remember a long list of ‘Don’ts’ or worrying about getting over all the hazards on the course.”

The player will say to an instructor, “Gee: that’s a long carry over that lake, what will help me to pitch my ball onto the green?” And the instructor will reply, “Use plenty of wrist action in your swing and that will give the necessary loft and distance to your shot.”

Splash—into the water! “There you are. I put a lot of wrist action into the shot and look where the ball goes,” says the player, on failing to get the desired result.

That’s just the trouble, “look where the ball goes,” you don’t realize, that, if you even think about where the ball might go, you’ll find yourself looking up long before you have actually landed the clubhead on the ball. Now in such a case, I’ll let you decide whether the player’s attention is concentrated on the execution or on the outcome of the shot.

The thought uppermost in the player’s mind usually concerns the outcome of the shot. Of course he listens and perhaps hears

every bit of advice given him about how the shot should be played, but it could not have made a very deep impression on him for the simple reason that it isn’t practical to think consciously of more than one thing at a time or attempt, to execute consciously more than one move at a time.

Divided thought and divided action bring only one result, and that is to have the player working at cross purposes with himself. Through his failure to simplify both thought and action there are bound to be positive and negative influences in his technique. Simplifying both mental and physical processes is the outstanding trait of every good golfer.

As a part of the process of simplifying the execution of your swing it is best to boil your thoughts about technique down to just one idea to cover the whole swing. With a thousand and one bromides to choose from, it would seem an easy matter to pick out one idea to which you could give all of your attention. However, it is not enough to simply concentrate your efforts on any single idea, it is necessary to select some idea that will control the entire action.

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SIMPLIFY THOUGHT AND ACTION

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For example, there are countless points suggested in regard to the placing and movement of the hands, and likewise, in connection with the body, there are numerous maxims concerning its position and action during the swing. Yet not a single one of these points has any practical value to the player, unless it covers the relation between the body, arms and the hands. No matter how your hands are placed on the club, or how you try to get them to act, they cannot work efficiently without the help of your arms, shoulders and back.

The most important single idea about the golf swing is coordination. Your body moving in harmony with your hands, sounds simple enough, doesn't it, and, no doubt without bothering to check up on this point, you really think that your weight is traveling with the club most of the time. As long as you are swinging away smoothly and successfully, you aren't conscious of any particular part of the action, but when you are off your game, chances are you will blame your hands for your difficulty. On this account you'll either alter your grip on the club or attempt to change the action of one or both hands at some stage of the swing.

"Take the club back with a straight left arm and don't bend your wrists until you get to the top of your backswing."

Nearly every golfer has received this or similar advice and out of a million or more players who have tried to satisfy the requirements of a straight left arm and the proper wrist action, there are probably less than a hundred who have succeeded in making them a permanent part of their swings.

Those who fail to get the desired

wrist action, are the very ones who have their bodies working against their hands. When attempting to move your hands in one direction, and, at the same time, allowing your hips to move in the opposite direction, such as by letting your weight remain on your left foot during the backswing, you are preventing the very end you seek.

Coordination can only be had when all of your muscles and joints are free to move naturally, and the easiest way to establish this looseness is to make sure that you have your entire body in motion. Having your back in motion during the swing does not mean that you can allow the upper part of your body to bob up and down. You must see to back to sway from side to side or to that the lower part of your back or hips are moving freely from side to side.

To check up on the coordination of the body, arms and hands, you need only look to the three sources of freedom, namely, the wrists, the upper section of the spinal column and the lower section of the spinal column. The illustrations accompanying this article will show the correct and incorrect treatment of these sources of freedom. When you have eliminated all tension from these important sections you will have no trouble in making a smooth and accurate swing.

The manner of placing your hands on the club should afford the maximum of freedom in your wrists and forearms. Next, in taking your stance, the position of your feet and hips should afford plenty of freedom for your hips to move from side to side with the action of your hands. And most important of all, every movement of body, hands and the club should be coordinated through the looseness in the upper section of your spinal column

SELECTING A GOLF COURSE SITE

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The Forsgate Farms Golf Course is being built on a private estate—a farm of about one thousand and four hundred acres. Most of the land is very flat, but it so happens that there is one tract of about one hundred and fifty acres which is ideal in topography, similar to some of the best Long Island land, with great rolls and billows but no real hills. Some of the soil is excellent, but about half of it will require special treatment with cover crops to make it suitable for good turf. No clearing is necessary, except for a few apple trees. There is no rock. A great part of the course will be visible from the club house and the effect will be very pleasing. Here two factors govern the selection: (1) It must not be outside the limits of the private estate; (2) It must be the most suitable tract within those boundaries.

It can readily be seen from the brief descriptions given above that the six typical cases vary greatly. One can not lay down any definite rules. The limitations are usually too great. In some cases keeping the cost down is of primary consideration. In other cases quality is of greater importance. In some cases any good land within a radius of several miles will do. In four of the above named cases the

architect was consulted before any choice was made, whereas in two cases the choice of land was fixed by conditions over which there was no control.

Certainly in most cases it is wise to consult the architect before land has definitely been selected. His judgment should be very worth while. He should be selected for his ability, experience, and integrity. Beware of the man who, after brief inspection, goes into ecstasies over a piece of property, gives an estimate (usually low in order to make a n impression) on snap judgment, and starts telling about how the holes should be laid out.

Give the architect an opportunity to make a careful study and don't press him too much for opinions on questions which your own better judgement should tell you can be answered only after full and definite consideration. Don't fix in your mind some course that you are going to try to duplicate. The conditions in your section may be entirely different from those in another section. Select your architect with care and allow him to give his imagination full play and present his plan. He may surprise you with something you do not expect. Let us hope that he will not surprise you in the wrong way.