



EXCLUSIVE BY
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FIND THE PATH TO A BETTER SWING

MANY club golfers kick start their swing incorrectly by swinging the club back on either of two incorrect swing paths – that is whipping the club too far inside the target line or letting the club drift outside the line.

These are the only takeaway faults you can make and they are a major contributor to hitting poor shots because if your takeaway path is not straight, or on the correct path, this then sets in motion a chain of events where your downswing and through-impact positions mirror what occurred in the takeaway. The degree in which the club is out of an ideal path is reflected in the severity of the mis-hit.

For example, if you take the club away on a path well inside the target line (pic 1), the club shaft and head, in the majority of cases, then approach the ball from way inside the line (pic 2). The swing path through impact is then very much an inside-the-target-line-to-outside-the-target line (pic 3).

Conversely, if the shaft points outside the target line in the takeaway (pic 4), it will

follow this same outside-the-line path back to the ball (pic 5) and you will have no recourse but to swing across the line of the ball to have the club finish inside the target line in the follow-through (pic 6).

When you set up to the ball, it is sitting on the target line. At the start of the swing, the bottom of the club is pointed at part of that line (pic 7) – which I have illustrated with a rod along the ground – if it is as wide as the clubhead.

When I swing the club back, the bottom of the shaft is tracing a line along that path all the way back (pics 8, 9, 10 & 11). Then, when I swing down again (pic 12), it should point down to it as you swing through impact (pics 13, 14 & 15). So the path is never going straight through, it is always on a slightly curved path.

How does this happen? If your body turns correctly, that is if it rotates or turns in a

circle, the club will follow a correct path. In the article regarding swinging with loose arms (*Golf Australia*, July 2008), I talked about imagining you had dangling rope-like arms when you swing the club. This loose feeling in the arms allows the body

to control the path of the club, not your arms.

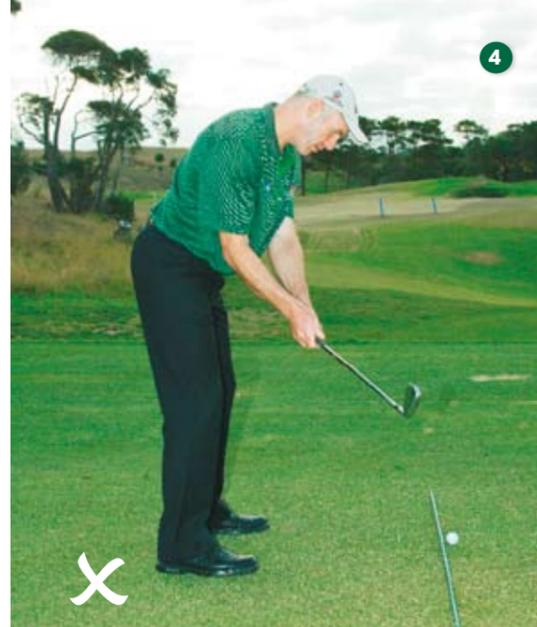
Another important thing to note is the position of the right forearm (for right-handers) approaching

impact or as soon as the right wrist is below the elbow in the downswing. In relation to the target line on the ground, the right forearm, or an extension of it, is pointed at that target line on approach (pic 13). Then, at impact, the right forearm is still pointing at the target line (pic 14).

For the vast majority of golfers, who slice the ball as a result of a swing path that moves from outside the target line to inside the target line through impact,

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PHOTOS: BRENDAN JAMES X 18





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they should try and practise the feeling of swinging from inside to outside the target line. This is what it might feel like to a slicer, but in fact the club will actually be on a good swing path. They have to feel like they are going to the opposite extreme to get it right.

One way you can do this is to imagine you are hitting a certain section of the ball, not just the ball. For example, if you are a slicer and need to swing with a feeling of

inside-to-outside the target line, try aiming to hit the back inside quarter of the ball.

A good drill for all players involves pushing a shaft into the ground about ten paces in front of you, right on the target line. Make a swing and see where the ball starts in relation to the shaft (pics 16, 17 & 18). If it starts left of the shaft, you have swung on a path from outside-to-in (for right-handers), and conversely, if it starts right of the shaft your path is from inside-to-out. To correct

your swing path, feel as though you need to swing on a path to start the ball on the opposite side of the shaft to which you would normally see your ball fly. ●



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