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Keys To Improving Distance From The Tee

By Jack Moorehouse

Players taking my golf lessons often confuse length off the tee with muscle power. They're not the same. While you may never drive the ball as far as John Daly, quite possibly the Tour's longest driver, you can generate additional power off the tee—and improve your golf handicap —by developing a sounder technique.

Here are 7 keys to a great drive:

· Widen your stance for stability · Point your left toe slightly toward target (for right-handers) · Hover the clubhead above the ball · Don't rush the back swing · Hit hard with your right hand · Take advantage of playing elements.

If you've read my golf tips, you know I often mention improving your technique. That's because good technique promotes good shots, whether you're driving, pitching, chipping, putting, or just hitting an iron. And good technique starts with your address.

Once you've selected a target and determined the ball's flight path, take an address position designed to generate power. Widen your stance slightly, which improves stability and provides a solid base from which to swing for power, and place about 60 percent of your weight on your left side (for right-handers), promoting a good power coil.

Greg Norman does two additional things to generate more power: (1) he points his left toe toward the hole slightly, encouraging his left side to clear out of the way more easily through impact; and (2) he hovers the club above the ground, promoting a smooth one-piece takeaway. The takeaway produces a wide arc and builds rhythm, as I've written in my golf tips, both of which are required to generate additional power.

At the top of the backswing, your shoulders must turn a full 90 degrees, and you should end up with your back pointing at the target. Lifting your chin away from your chest encourages the shoulder turn. John Daly drives the ball great distances. Many players ask about him during their golf lessons, wanting to know his secret. In addition to sound technique, Daly takes a massive shoulder turn and

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maintains a wide swing arc, yet he's never out of sync. He always has rhythm and tempo throughout the swing.

Once you've completed the backswing, you start the downswing phase. This transition is critical. If you rush it, you narrow and cramp your swing arc. You also create a tendency to swing straight down on the ball, sapping your power—the opposite of what you want to do. Fred Couples' transition is nearly flawless. He shifts his weight to his left side and tucks his right elbow in at the right side, all while maintaining the right angle between his wrists and the club, which generates power.

Maintaining a straight left arm is also critical during the transition, as most golf instruction points out. A straight left enables the clubhead to be returned to the ball squarely and at the right attack angle. This move re-establishes the swing radius, keeping it wide and power laden. Curtis Strange provides a good example of someone who makes the transition well. Even though his left elbow is bent during the backswing, he straightens his left arm in the downswing, re-establishing the radius of his swing and

generating power at impact.

The position at impact is something that distinguishes all great drivers. Whether they have a herky-jerky swing or a smooth big-hitting one, their swings are identical at impact. The image to keep in mind at this point is that of swinging through the ball, not to it. Another key is hitting hard with your right hand. As Henry Cotton said, "it's not possible to hit too hard with your right hand as long as the left had works in unison."

In addition to improving your technique, taking advantage of the playing elements helps generate more distance. Those elements include the wind. Use a following wind to add extra distance to your drive. Also, teeing the ball higher than normal generates higher ball flight, with more carry through the air, so that you can get more distance.

Playing into a headwind, on the other hand, kills power. In this situation, you want a shot with a more penetrating trajectory, but be careful not to swing down on the ball, as we said previously. Doing so creates excessive backswing, which has the effect of putting backspin on the ball, making it climb higher. (However, teeing the ball lower also has a tendency to make you swing on a more upright plane, creating a fade. Bear that in mind.)

Whether you're taking advantage of the wind or working on your technique, try to maintain your rhythm and tempo. Swing about 75–80 percent, allowing the club to do the work.

Once you've mastered these suggestions, you will see some well-deserved distance improvements and can start taking serious aim at lowering your golf handicap.

Jack Moorehouse is the author of the best-selling book "How To Break 80 And Shoot Like The Pros

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." He is NOT a golf pro, rather a working man that has helped thousands

of golfers from all seven continents lower their handicap immediately. He has a free weekly newsletter with the latest golf tips, golf lessons and golf instruction.

Is Your Golf Driver A Little Dusty?

By George Gabriel

Playing good golf requires the knowledge and use of every golf club in the bag. I don't know how many times I've seen a golfer leaving their driver in the bag when teeing it up on the tee box. I always ask the same question over and over again, and get the same answer. "Why do you leave the driver in the bag on long golf holes?" "I cannot hit my driver off of the tee box." Has always been the same response. Typically they duff any other club they choose, but blame it on a bad swing. A bad golf shot with a driver has always been because of the golf club, never the golf swing. Why is that?

It is a matter of confidence. Hitting the driver off the tee box, is no different than hitting any other wood or iron off the tee box. As a matter of fact, the club head is bigger and should be a lot easier to make contact with the golf ball. Golfers, who do not hit their driver off of the tee box, simply have convinced themselves it is too hard to do. They have convinced themselves to a point that any other club selection is the right choice, therefore when a player hits a couple good shots off the tee box with their 3 wood or 2 iron, it justifies leaving the driver in the bag. There will be golf holes with tight fairways, and you will consider anything but a driver off the tee box that is easier to control, but to give up on any one golf club, should never be an option.

Do not give up on the driver. It is not as hard to hit as you think. Take the same golf swing as any other golf club you would choose. Accuracy will come with every other attempt. The only difference with the driver and any other golf club is the set up position in relation to your distance from the ball, because of the length of the golf club. Stand a little further back and take the same golf swing as you would with any other golf club. Practice with different golf ball positions and keep your confidence level high.

For greater confidence, practice hitting the driver off of the fairway without a tee. It will help you reach those long par fives. Practice with the ball positioned in the middle of your stance, and you will soon be lifting them off the fairway. Keep your golf swing as normal as possible. Do not try to scoop the ball off of the fairway. With proper ball positioning in your stance and a good straight arm on the way back and through, the driver clubface will lift it off the fairway as if you had it teed up. Lifting the ball off of the fairway with a driver only requires a good lie and a confident golf swing. It will rise off the fairway like any other fairway wood, but you will get more distance.

Take a little more confidence in your golf swing to the tee box, and it will not matter what golf club you select. Each golf club is as easy as the other. You just need a little more faith in your golf swing.

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