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Synchronizing Your Arms And Body

By Jack Moorehouse

Whatever your golf handicap is, you've probably experienced days when everything on the course

seemed to fall into place. You're golfing with a fun-loving foursome. You're playing a great course on a great day. And you're driving, chipping, and putting well. In fact, you're doing everything well. It all seems so easy.

And, then, for no apparent reason, you lose it. You can't do anything right. Your drives miss the fairways. Your approach shots fall way short. And your chip shots run by the hole and off the green. Good shots are far and few between. And when you finally hit a good shot, you shank the next, turning pars into double and triple bogeys. Everything feels confused, as if you've never hit a ball before.

One reason why we sometimes "lose it" is timing. In golf instruction timing means synchronizing your turning body and your swinging arms, resulting in a smooth release of the clubhead through impact and beyond. Timing helps generate control, accuracy, and distance. More importantly, it helps generate swing consistency, regardless of your golf handicap.

How do you know when your timing is right? When your timing is on, your swing is fluid and effortless. It feels like your hitting the ball on the sweet spot every time. And the ball is taking off. When your timing is off, your swing feels out of whack. You struggle to hit the ball, never mind generating distance or driving it straight. Your swing feels confused. In fact, everything feels confused.

Your confusion often begins with a loss of timing. In golf, loss of timing occurs when the upper parts of your arms separate from your rotating chest halfway through your back swing and follow-through. If you could see yourself in slow-motion, you'd see your left arm separate and lift from your chest in the backswing and your right arm separate and lift from your chest in the follow-through.

Recapturing your timing is essential to regaining that "everything is easy" feeling. It's why we take golf lessons and read golf tips. The sensation you want to feel is that of the pressure being maintained between your upper arms and chest. The left arm should stretch diagonally across your chest on the backswing and the right arm in a similar position in the follow-through. This is called linkage. When it's broken, timing strays and confusion reigns.

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Another reason why we sometimes "lost it" is tempo. Tempo is the time it takes you to complete your full swing, from start to finish. When you're playing well, you feel like your hitting the ball long, solid, and accurately. You find your tempo is pretty much the same on every full shot. But when your game is off, your tempo is off as well.

Generally, a player's tempo reflects his personality. If you're a fast moving, quick talking type of person, your swing will be fast and quick. If you're a laid back, easy-going type of person, your swing will be unhurried, easy by nature.

When combined, timing and tempo help determine swing consistency. But neither is easy to develop. By working on both, you'll develop the kind of swing even players with low golf handicaps will envy.

Here's an exercise I use in my golf lessons to develop a player's appreciation for his/her swing tempo:

Address a ball. Raise the clubhead off the ground slightly. Move it forward to a position a foot or so into the follow-through, and start swinging from there. Guide the clubhead back over the ball, complete your backswing, and swing through the ball all in one motion. Repeat this exercise a number of times. Eventually, you will start developing an appreciation of your swing tempo.

Here's an exercise to develop your swing's linkage:

This exercise is designed to train no more than a three quarter length swing.

1.Place a ball on the ground. 2.Take a 9-iron and assume a normal address position. 3.Next, place a head cover underneath each armpit, 4.Take three-quarter length swings with the 9-iron. 5.Repeat the exercise

You want to focus on making the swing without losing the head cover; this forces you, in turn, to concentrate on rotating your arms and swinging your body together. Synchronizing your arms and body maintains that all-important linkage between these key parts. Repeat the exercise until you feel comfortable.

Naturally, if you take a full-length swing, the head covers will fall out. So take only three-quarter length swings. Once you feel comfortable doing this, dispense with the head covers, but remember the feeling. Try to maintain it as you hit balls without the covers. Soon, you'll feel your timing returning.

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.

Speaking Body Language

By Robert F. Abbott

I observed an almost surreal event when I was a business student.

At the front of the classroom, an entrepreneur was practicing a pitch he would make later to venture capital firms. Specifically, he was talking about a technology his firm had developed, a respirator which had the potential to save the lives of many infants.

When he talked about the potentially great financial returns, the audience, made up of business students, sat back passively. But when he talked about getting babies through critical moments with his respirators, every single person in the classroom sat up, alert and fully focused.

As he went back and forth between stories of saving babies and talking about financial results, almost every student in the classroom moved with him. And what's more, it seemed the students' unconscious body movements had been carefully choreographed.

We sat up together when the entrepreneur talked about saving babies, and we sat back in unison when he discussed the numbers. And, by the way, I did it too until I become aware of how we were responding as a group.

Since that event I've been a firm believer in body language, which is the idea that people unconsciously show what they're feeling or thinking through gestures or body movements.

As you know, the art of interpreting body language is hardly a science. But, we do know a few basics that can help us read the emotions of others. A few examples follow.

Crossed arms, as almost every salesperson knows, means the person on the other side of the table is defensive or not receptive. On the other hand, if that person leans forward and keeps his or her eyes on you, then you do have a receptive listener.

If you watch novice speakers, you'll probably notice how they keep their arms close to their bodies, indicating a lack of confidence. As they get more practice speaking in public, you'll see their arms move away from their sides and become active tools for conveying messages.

Arms wide open indicate trust and openness, as do open hands, while arms held high above the head show a sense of victory, and clenched hands indicate anger.

Curiously, one of the most difficult interpretations of body language involves lying. Researchers have probably spent more time on this aspect of body language than any other. And their conclusions? The only surefire way to know if another person is lying is to observe very small and fast wrinklings of the brow.

If you haven't yet spent much time studying body language, I recommend that you add it to your to-do

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list for communication development. It's invaluable not only for speaking and listening, but also for negotiating and leading.

Robert F. Abbott writes and publishes Abbott's Communication Letter. If you subscribe, you will receive, at no charge, communication tips that help you lead or manage more effectively. Click here for more information:

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Speaking Body Language

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