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The Golf Swing Phases Of Your Tee-off, Putt, Or Any Other Swing

By Glen Osborne

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The Golf Swing: Phases Of Your Tee-off, Putt, Or Any Other Swing

Picture yourself in this scene at the first tee of a golf course.

- * Hold the golf club loosely
- * Have my left thumb here
- * Bend my knees there
- * Keep my eye on the ball
- * Get outta here you miserable fly!
- * Don't talk on the tee
- * What was that important tip dad told me yesterday?
- * Good grief! Everyone is staring at me!
- * What did the golf teacher on the Golf Channel say last week?
- * Rats! I got my 6-iron instead of my 9-iron!
- * What did my neighbor's cat say to do?
- * Aaaaarrrrrrggghhhh!
- * There's too much to remember!

Don't despair! Below, you will learn an orderly solution to this confusing state of affairs as you attempt to tee-off, putt, chip, pitch, or play any other type of golf shot.

In time you will blend some of the following phases together as one phase. But, never develop thoughts which jump back and forth among these phases.

This is the 3rd article in my series which will lead you towards good putting, chipping, and swing skills.

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In my 2nd article I introduced you to the idea that most of our poor golf skills come mostly from one wrong thought which is buried in our subconscious thinking. Much of what I have taught my golf students is designed to replace that wrong thinking with a better thought which can become part of our subconscious control of the golf swing.

This article will give you an overview of a very important part of your golfing what to think about when you try to hit that white round "thingy" on the ground (or in the water or off the neighbor's flower bed.)

By following a regular pattern in your effort to hit the golf ball you will be able to give more attention to overcoming that subconscious, natural desire to push your golf club through the ball to make the ball get to point B.

You will learn about a basic step-by-step process that you can follow for every golf shot. This is a bit lengthy but it covers some important ideas.

I want you to know these phases before you get into my putting and swing instructions. These lesson modules are given in a way which follow these phases. You will be able to apply them in your current golf outings. You will also be able to practice these phases in a limited way if you practice putting on your carpet at home.

This process separates a lot of things you try to remember into a consistent order of events which will become a habit for you to follow without giving much thought. In fact, at each phase you will eventually focus on 1 or 2 ideas which will act as a guide for doing that phase with very little thought.

Many of these phases are given in a way so that you can:

- * do them
- * know that you are prepared for the remaining phases
- * and then change your focus to the next phase without going back to any thoughts of the phase you have just done

Your thoughts will be so organized that you will not feel like you are running through a checklist of 20 to 50 tips that have you fidgeting at the ball as you try to remember what to do.

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Phase One – DISTANCE:

It begins as you arrive at the next tee-off or where your ball lies from the previous hit.

It makes you think of the distance or the height of your next hit.

When you know your distance or height choose the club which is usually hitting the ball the indicated distance

Once the correct golf club is in your hands you eliminate distance from any further part of your golf swing steps

This phase is the first of two phases which deal with you, the golf ball, and where the ball is to land.

Optional Phase PRACTICE SWINGS away from the ball or tee-off:

Light, half-swings

Practice your posture for the club in your hands

Practice your turn movements in posture. So important!

Training your back and "tummy" muscles to execute the main part of swinging your golf club is the priority.

Give thought to these phases of playing your golf shot

Phase Two POSITION at the ball and DIRECTION:

Here you place your feet with 3 objectives in mind:

Line your toes of both feet along a parallel line from the ball to its destination.

Move closer or farther from the ball to allow you to be in good posture

Move sideways to the ball so it is positioned where you want it between your feet.

My lesson modules will teach you some ways to do this phase.

When you are satisfied that your feet are positioned do not move them again until the momentum of your club, arms, and body pull you into an upright posture as your swing is finishing.

Once you have completed this phase you can hold the club wherever you want to prepare for the next phase.

DIRECTION and DISTANCE are now complete. You do not want to think of these 2 elements of your golf swing process again. The remaining phases focus on you, the golf club, the golf ball, and your swing movements and non-movements.

Phase Three TAKE HOLD of your golf CLUB

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In this phase you "grip" your golf club in your desired manner.

As you do this your feet are not to move.

This phase also places the bottom of the club head in the correct alignment to your body.

My articles and lesson modules will help you develop a desired grip on your club.

Once you have taken hold of the club you should not move your hands or fingers on the club for any reason – no fidgeting!

Phase Four POSTURE of your legs, body, head, and arms

Here you establish your foundation for controlled movements

You establish desired angles of all joints to allow the best freedom of movement when you swing the club.

You position yourself in these angles while confirming that you feel almost the same comfort you do while standing in a natural position.

You do not want to feel any stress. If you do then you will most likely be out of posture in some part of your legs, body, arms, or head.

My articles and lesson modules will teach you how to practice

a good golf posture at home until you can feel what your posture should be without going through the practice steps.

You will also learn to feel 3 body check points and one visual check point so you can be in posture in 1 or 2 seconds once you have gripped your golf club.

Phase Five SNUG: not "loose" – not "relaxed" – not "rigid"

What is THIS?!!!

I have seen golfers "keeping their heads still" so rigidly their heads quiver.

I have seen golfers so relaxed or loose that every move they try to make causes other movements they don't want to make.

The idea of relaxed means that you are comfortable and confident in your head that you have done some orderly steps to prepare you for the best golf swing you can do. It is a "head" thing not a body thing.

You need to snug your joints just enough so that you do not have unwanted movements when you carry out your intended movements.

Do you want to learn to do a "one piece takeaway"? Learn a comfortable level of snugness in your body and you will be ready to do this skill. (I have an article on how to do the

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"one piece takeaway". Check out my website for its availability.) I also have an article about firming a part of your body which is seldom referred to in talk about golf swing technique. Watch for this article.

Phase Six WHERE IS YOUR SPINE?

"Whaaaat? Why it is behind my tummy and heart!"
Right. But, it is also at a specific angle that you set in Phase Four.

To make comfortable, controlled turns in the next 2 phases you need to be aware of your spine angle.

A pause in the steps

Everything you have done in the phases listed above has been to prepare you for the next 2 phases. You do not have to rush through the above steps. But, you do not want to take too long at each stage. Now, you are about to carry out the motion phases which can last less than 3 seconds.

If you carefully prepare yourself in the above phases you will be ready for the stresses you will experience in the takeaway and return swing movements.

Phase Seven – TAKEAWAY or Backswing

Your golf swing can be ruined within the first inch of whatever movement you do in this phase.

Here, you need to know how to comfortably do 2 critical movements.

To maintain top control of these 2 movements you must know how to do a whole lot of "don't move this or that". But, the "whole lot" is taken care of in Phase Five.

This phase is a positional move which you will learn to do in a rhythmic tempo with the next phase.

You do not use power or speed in this phase.

You simply want to get your body, arms, and golf club a suitable distance away from your start position from where you can then apply a desired blow to the golf ball.

If you feel a bit weak during this phase and at the end of this phase then that is OK — if you feel comfortable and ready for the "violence" of the next phase.

Phase Eight THE RETURN SWING

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If you have executed the phases above to where you feel comfortable and ready then you have to do a lot of awkward work to ruin a good return swing to the ball.

An important part of this phase which you mentally train yourself at home is to realize that some of the muscles throughout your body, legs, and upper arms have either bunched up or stretched out of their position of Phase Six.

Part of the return swing involves "unbunching" or relaxing muscles which tightened to carry out the takeaway phase.

Part of the return swing involves tightening the muscles which relaxed and stretched to allow the takeaway movements.

The above two activity groups have to be carried out while holding as close as you can to the posture position set up in Phase Four.

All through this aggressive activity there are stresses on your body which are often caused by desired movements in other parts of your body.

Most importantly, you must not give in to the "one wrong thought" I have described in the previous article of the series of free articles available on my website.

My lesson modules teach you a method of carrying out 3 essential movements which are basic to the return swing of most of your golf shots.

Phase Nine THE FOLLOW-THROUGH

The momentum you create in Phase Eight will determine how you finish your swing movements after the ball has been hit.

If you lose your balance and lean or fall in the direction the ball is flying then any swing error is minor.

If you lose your balance in any other direction then you have done something very incorrect in Phase Eight.

Many of the swing errors of the previous 2 phases familiar to golfers will cause you to have an incorrect finish position in this phase.

The only time I teach you anything about a correct finish to your swing is when I show you my two basic turning exercises which come with all of my lesson modules.

FOCUS Training As You Practice These Phases

Above, I use the word, "focus". In each phase you are to focus on the purpose of that phase and on any steps you follow for that particular phase. When you have completed the step(s) of a phase

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you then change your focus to the steps and purpose of the next phase. You keep doing this until all the phases have been completed.

Phases 1 to 6 can be methodically thought out for every golf swing you do for the rest of your life. Phases 7 to 9 happen quickly in which you respond to a feeling or to 1 or 2 key thoughts which you have practiced. You practice the steps of each of these last 3 phases at home and at practice facilities.

You can use my swing instructions or my exercises to teach your mind the steps in slow motion. The more your mind can automatically remember the steps then the better it can direct and guide your muscle movements during the quickness of the actual golf swing.

Why Should You Practice These Phases?

In my lesson modules I will make frequent references to this process as it applies to putting, chipping, pitching, and the full swing.

These phases are a good starting point for you to learn as you venture forth to learn to golf or to become a better golfer. You will eventually develop your own process for playing a golf shot.

Practice these phases at home until each of them becomes automatic. You will begin to pick a one-word thought or phrase which helps you to remember each step.

As you become adept at completing the whole routine you will begin to see a panorama picture of your body, the ball, the target destination, and the surrounding golf course or driving range scenery.

Your goal is to be able to walk up to a tee or the ball in the grass, set up to the ball, and make minor adjustments until you feel comfortable and until you see the desired "picture". As soon as you see the "picture" and feel comfortable you will execute your golf swing before you have time to fidget or to get apprehensive.

Apprehension causes nervousness which causes tension which inhibits your golf swing. Someone says relax or be loose and the next time you flop around like a rag doll and wonder why

you hit a poor golf shot.

Practice these phases and you will build confidence that you will make your best swing most of the time.

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Glen teaches his golf program for Ladysmith, BCParks & Rec. Free articles and info about affordable live lessons, lesson modules, and video based lessons are available at:

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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.

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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.

Learned to play golf as a caddie in the mid sixties and continue to enjoy the game today. Now running a discount tee time site at

and a sister site at



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