

Straight Ahead

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“Stay Neutral To Go Forward”

Try as hard as you may, it's very difficult to create distance and control ball-flight, especially with a pair of overly active hands. This tendency to control is prevalent in almost every student I see. The effort a golfer will exhibit in trying to control where their club travels only creates shots that contribute to an inconsistent game. Dwelling on past and future shots while standing over a ball, elevates these tendencies to an even higher plateau.

As in previous articles, the need to employ a very sound and reliable Address Position is key. This creates confidence and conviction. Next, we need to find some way of eliminating the golf ball from the picture. It's often the number one "swing wrecker"! It's no coincidence that those smooth, unhurried practice swings, the ones that take place prior to the real ones, are the way they are. It's simple, there's no ball involved.

The hands and a grip pressure that is constantly changing are the main reasons that we're not hitting the ball further and straighter. Yes, each golfer will have their own unique ball-flight patterns. Some create a fade, some create a draw, or in most cases, a slice or a hook. Assuming that you're starting from the correct position, your bad shots are all manufactured by elevation changes and a fluctuating grip pressure. These changes are caused by being too ball and result conscious.

For these reasons alone, we need to create a more "Neutral" approach. Quietness in the hands will begin to take place when we stop swinging **at** the ball.

This neutrality should be present in the First Part of the swing (The Backward Motion), continue through the Transition section (the part where we change the swing's direction) and flow into the Second Part (The Forward Motion). The Address Position and the Finish are less prone to the effects of over-controlling.

There's no easy way to learn how to swing like there's no ball on the ground, if you're constantly mesmerized by it. It's a mind game and the best way that I can think of decreasing your tendency to hit at the ball, is to go to the range and regularly hit hundreds of balls, without watching the ball-flight. Listen to the sound of your shots and take note of the feel in your hands. They'll give you all

the feedback you need. If it doesn't sound like good contact, it isn't. If it feels like you've excavated a roll of sod from the fairway, you've lowered your elevation. Topped shots are caused by an increase in elevation.

You can lessen the tendency to anticipate the impact section of the swing. When you can cut down on that immediate pop-up reaction, you'll begin to reap the benefits of a quieter body motion. Your swing will flow, be less erratic and your scores should get lower.

This article is not only about attaining more "Neutrality" in the Forward Motion, but also about trying to become more "Neutral" in all sections of the golf motion. If you haven't read any of my previous articles, here's how I divide the golf motion.

1. The Address Position
2. The First Part
3. The Transition
4. The Second Part
5. The Finish

Through practice you can become less aware of the ball; and then you are ready to take it to the course! It's not easy though! With patience and perseverance, you should be able to resist the tendency to view your shots too soon. Holding back and tracking the ball at the highest point in its flight, will keep you from making those detrimental posture and grip changes.

Good luck and let me know what happens. Remember, try to stay neutral!

If you have any questions regarding the areas we have discussed today or have any queries about material from past articles, you can contact me at 613-885-9883 or, if you prefer, by email at northstring@gmail.com. I'll be glad to help in any way I can.

Until Next Time...Straight Ahead!