

Straight Ahead

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‘Hit/Stop’

When I was a youngster, my Dad – who was a teaching pro – taught me an excellent exercise. He called it ‘Hit/Stop.’

Although my dad didn’t explain why I should practice this exercise, or how it worked, I did what he suggested. I noticed it resulted in my shots being crisper, straighter and longer. Unfortunately, he passed away when I was eighteen. The reason why this exercise worked remained his secret.

It's called ‘Hit/Stop.’ That doesn't mean you literally stop at impact. You want your golf club to travel past the point of impact and end up with the shaft parallel to the ground (or as close as you can get to that position). As a result, your back foot remains planted a little longer. This helps with your stability and cuts down on the tendency to try to hit with too much of your B-side involved. (B-side is the side of your body furthest from the target.)

Although my dad never explained why or how ‘Hit/Stop’ worked, I have tried to come up with my own theories on the lesson he taught me. Here we are some fifty years later and I’m still utilizing my dad’s important lesson. The main point is that your game can be greatly improved by using this simple technique. This is why I am passing it along to you. It’s amazing that even through all the changes in equipment and technology, some things just don't change.

As we know, there are a myriad of theories out there about golf. Do this, don't do that, etc. Our golf swings are unique and are influenced by a number of personal factors such as strength, flexibility and our nervous systems. That being said, there is still one section of the golf swing that is of prime importance; it is the path the arms and hands

take prior to and just after striking the ball. This is where the unhinging of the wrists and that desired 'snap' takes place. A light grip is imperative for this to happen. All world-class pros and low handicappers are consistent and authoritative through this pathway.

When I practice the 'Hit/Stop' exercise, I notice that I have no choice to be anything but 'authoritative' in this key area. I know that if I am going to stop roughly twenty inches after striking the ball, there can't be anything wishy-washy or tentative in this part of my swing.

I witness many of my students being indecisive at this point in their swings. They seem to expend most of their energy at the point where the swing changes direction at the top of the backswing. Often, as they swing down towards the ball, this energy fades and they pull up as the club approaches the strike zone. There is unnecessary movement and vital energy is being wasted. This creates inconsistencies in the swing, which are *not* hallmarks of a sound golf game.

Of course, as I say in every article, your starting point should be a sound, correct and reliable 'Address Position.' Adding the simple 'Hit/Stop' technique to your routine will result in more of your shots going to your target area. You will experience more consistent ball contact and fewer pulls. This means a greater likelihood of hitting fairways and greens in regulation. As an added benefit, you will retain your body posture, and stay more grounded and down on your shots. All hallmarks of good golfers! As you gain confidence in this zone, you can start extending through your swing to a fuller, more complete finish.

If you have any questions regarding today's article or would like to know more about the instructional programs we are offering at Keystroke Golf Academy this year, please visit the Picton Golf & Country Club website or contact me at 613-885-9883 or northstring@gmail.com

Until Next Time...Straight Ahead!