

Golf instruction from Class "A" PGA Professional Mahrty Lehr.

Side by Side: Golf Lessons with the Pro

by Mahrty Lehr

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Side by Side:

Golf Lessons with the Pro

Golf Instruction for All Ages and Abilities



Mahrty Lehr

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Chapter 6: The Grip

We'll start with your grip on the club. If your hands are not placed on the club correctly, you are in for a lot of disappointment as you play. Let's get it right, so you do not have to relearn. Relearning is a pain in the neck, or lower, if you wish.

Left Hand Placement

1-Your left hand is the leader in the golf swing; it is placed on the club first and at the end of the grip. If you look at your left hand, there is an M in the middle of your palm:



I have a clearly defined M, but this picture will help you find yours.

2- The grip should be placed between the long line of the M that is closest to your fingers and your fingers themselves:



It should not be placed in the fingers themselves, as this will create too much release in the wrist:



If the club is placed in the fingers, it will move too quickly and will lack stability. Your club will not stay on the target line long enough and it will shift to the right or left. You may have a good round or occasionally get lucky, but our goal is for you to put your hands on the club and to square the club at impact to your intended target every time.

Conversely, if you do the opposite and grip too high in the palm towards your wrist, you will create wiggle room. Take a look at your glove. If it has worn spots in the heel of the glove, this is a result of wiggle or movement. We will discuss this further in Chapter 8, “Grip Pressure.” If you have wiggle room in your grip, you lose the ability to

control the golf club and to square your club at impact. The clubface at impact with the ball will have turned to the left or right of your target.

The end of the grip is resting under the fleshy part of your palm. I call this the heel of your hand:



This placement is very important.

3- Before you wrap your fingers around the club, I have exciting news for you. I believe that Ben Hogan had two secrets, not just one. The first he divulged in Life Magazine in 1957, which was the opening of the clubface combined with the supination of the hands. We will discuss the supination of the hands in Chapter 18, “The Full Swing”.

His second, I believe unrevealed secret, has to do with the grip and the left hand placement. I was watching an old recording of Hogan and here is what jumped out at me. He had a club in his hands. He took the fleshy part at the base of the left thumb and wrapped it *over* the club.

Most people just hold the club. Hogan deliberately wrapped the fleshy part over the club, so that it was on top of the fingertips. Notice the base of the thumb placing pressure on the fingertips:



I experimented with this and it is phenomenal. This technique locks the grip in place and it is absolutely incredible how much more

power you gain. You just don't see people do this. I watched the video a few times and noticed that while it looked like he was just fiddling with the club, every time he placed the fleshy part of the thumb over the club, he smiled right at the camera. He did this three or four times and smiled each time because this was his secret weapon, in my opinion.

4- Just like Hogan, wrap your fingers around the club and lock them in place with the fleshy part at the base of the thumb. The left thumb will be on the right side of the shaft as you look down at your hand:



5 - When you lower your arm, this will put the V that is formed between your thumb and forefinger of the left hand pointed diagonally to your right shoulder:

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By placing the left hand in this manner, you will have leverage at the top of your swing to pull the club back down. This will feel uncomfortable at first, but this leverage is very important.

If you do not have the correct V formation in your hand, you will lack the leverage to pull the club down from the top of the backswing. Instead, you will throw it with your right hand, which is your dominant side. The shaft will go straight and you will have no clubhead speed or torquing motion of the shaft. When the torque is dissipated, you will have to force, or push, the swing through with your right hand and arm in an upward motion. This will create topspin instead of backspin. You could also end up creating a slicing motion or a hooking motion. At that point the club will actually go outside the flight line or too far inside the flight line. We will be discussing the flight line in Chapter 10, "Alignment."

If you end up throwing the club with your right hand as described, your odds of striking the golf ball accurately will decrease significantly and the majority of the time it will go to the right. This exact mistake is where many people, especially amateurs, lose a lot of clubhead speed.

If, however, you have the correct V formation as pictured, you will have the leverage to pull the club down with your left hand. The shaft *bows* or flexes, creates torque and stores clubhead speed, and when it releases through impact with the ball, it maximizes the acceleration rate of the clubhead. You will be able to square your club at the intended target and give speed to the club for maximum distance. It seems much easier to do it correctly, doesn't it?

We are looking to create consistency. This can be as simple as confirming the V formation with your thumb and forefinger in your left hand pointed to your right shoulder.

6- The back of your left hand mirrors the clubface so it needs to be square:



This creates stability and keeps the clubhead square for a fraction of a second longer and gives you a more consistent shot pattern.

7- At this point, if you are gripping the club correctly in your left hand you will be able to form a fulcrum with the forefinger and heel of your hand. No other fingers will be on the club when you conduct this check. The club will rest under the heel of the left hand and forefinger:



If the club rolls out of this position you do not have the club far enough under the heel of the hand.

Right Hand Placement

The right hand is the power and it fits behind and underneath the left. Many people incorrectly believe that you need to swing hard, but it's the speed of the swing that creates power. It's not how hard you swing but how fast.

If you place your right hand on the club correctly, you will be able to use all the power you have and hit the ball towards your intended target. Your hands will not fight each other, they will work together in the swing, and you will maximize your clubhead's speed and distance.

1-Look at the palm of your right hand, you will see where the fingers join the hand:



2- Now place your right hand behind and underneath the left. Put the grip in the bottom portion of your fingers, where they connect with the palm, and position your middle two fingers:



3- Wrap the rest of your fingers around the club. The V that is formed between the thumb and forefinger of the right hand is directed straight at your chin:



You can position your fingers in a ten-finger grip or an overlap grip or an interlocking grip. Let's review the grip types and their differences next.

Chapter 9: Posture

Let's talk about posture and setting up for your swing.

1-Place your feet even with the outside of your shoulders:



2- Bend from your waist and stick your butt out, keeping your back straight. You want your weight on the balls of your feet, not the heels. This stance is more stable and athletic:



The pelvis is tilted downward with your tail out; the knees are bent and flexed inward. Your back is straight and your head is over the ball.

Many people will try to tuck their pelvis under, this is not correct:



Tucking your pelvis under forces your arms and hands into the hitting area and restricts the use of your legs. It moves your head back and puts your weight at the heels of your feet. This is a very un-athletic, or unstable, position and it is difficult to swing when your body is not stable. This incorrect position also creates topspin, which will make the ball go down, not up.

How do you know if you are in the incorrect position? If you have done a virtual “sit” in position in which you’ve just moved your pelvis straight down as opposed to backwards, this is not correct. If you are in this sitting position, you won’t get as much speed to your swing.

3- The left side of your body will sit higher than your right. This is because the left hand is placed on the club first, with the right hand underneath and placed second. You will see this slight angle in your shoulders and hips:



4-The knees are slightly bent, with pressure down and inward, towards the balls of your feet. This places pressure on the inside of the knees which ties the upper and lower body together, so they are in sync during the swing, moving in unison and not separately:



I know that this feels awkward, but you will get used to it.

When you are in the correct posture, you will have a *sequence of motion*, in which the muscles fire off of each other. One correct motion

leads to the next correct motion. We work on the fundamentals to ensure that when you start your swing correctly, you will have this sequence of motion.

For example, the pelvic bone needs to be tilted and facing downwards so that your hips, knees and ankles get a bit of a lateral motion as you swing through the hitting area. This lateral motion helps to create speed. If the pelvic bone is flat or tilted up, you won't get this lateral motion and your body will end up spinning or turning, which will take the clubface off the line too quickly. The longer your clubface stays on the line, the more accurate your shot will be.

There are three things that professionals practice more than anything else: 1) grip, which we have discussed, 2) posture, and 3) alignment, which we will discuss next. You cannot take posture for granted or ignore it. Without good posture, your body will start to create small manipulations and you won't have the correct sequence of motion, which will affect both your accuracy and distance.

Chapter 15:

Putting Basics

Putting is the most individual part of the golf game. Many people will develop their own techniques and choice of putter that is both comfortable for them and repeatable. But before you start to customize your putting technique, ensure that you understand the basics of putting.

The putt is the only shot in golf with topspin, or over-spin, on the ball. Topspin will create distance but will help your ball hold the line by digging into the green and moving towards the hole. All putters have loft to help produce topspin; most have about three or four degrees of loft.

1- The upper arms and elbows are held in tight to the sides of your body, which creates a connected feeling and a solid strike:



There should be no independent motion of the wrists. I prefer a heavier putter so you can feel the stroke more, especially for beginners.

A heavier putter will help you feel the relationship between the putter head and your hands, arms, and shoulders moving together as one unit.

2- Remember that the left hand is the leader. The back of the left hand faces your target, as does the palm of the right hand, even though your fingers are closed and the palm is hidden.

Ensure that you are holding the putter correctly. If you open your right fingers and thumb, the palm should be facing the target. If you open your left fingers and thumb, the left palm should be facing your right palm:



Then close your hands as you normally would:



Your hands are parallel to each other when they are placed on the club so they work together. They should be in front of the ball, not behind it.

3- It is critical to ensure that your head doesn't move. The head is slightly behind, not over, the putter and the ball and you will be looking at the backside of the ball:



4- Position your weight on your left side, this helps to anchor you so you won't move during the putt.

5- The ball is played off the inside of the left heel and the left wrist is arched so that your wrist doesn't break down through impact:



The following is not correct; note the left wrist is not arched and is behind the ball:



6- The toe of the putter is flat on the ground and the heel of the putter will be slightly above the ground. Many people will place their hands too low with the toe of the putter off the ground, which is not correct. The toe of the putter flat on the ground will help ensure that the slight arch in your left wrist doesn't break down at impact:



7- If you are using a face-balanced putter, the face of the club will face the ground when it reaches the back of the stroke:



Beginners should start with a center-shafted putter so they don't have to worry about where to strike the ball. Play the ball at the center of shaft and you will get more feedback as to solidness of the stroke.

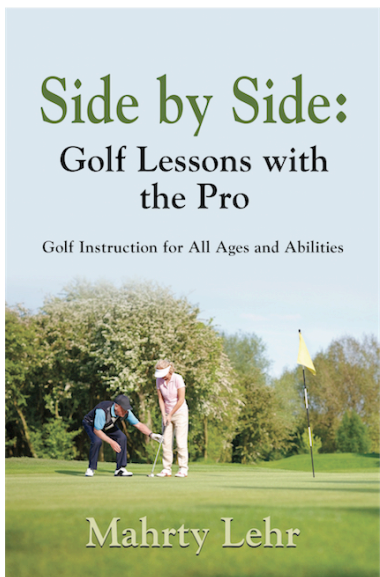
8- You want a smooth, short stroke. If your stroke is too long, you will have a tendency to decelerate the putter through impact. When you decelerate the putter, two things happen: the putter blade may wobble which makes it hard to hold the line and it becomes hard to judge your distance.

For a putt approximately 10 feet or less, the backstroke is only about 6 inches but the putter blade will be well past 6 inches on the follow through. This varies by the length of the putt, a short putt may only be 6 inches but a longer putt will be more.

Develop a putting stroke that goes back slowly and then accelerates, so there is no movement in your grip, and the ball will roll with topspin. To help you develop a smooth and accelerated stroke, take the grip off of your center-shafted putter, fill the shaft with sand, replace the grip, and practice a bit. This also helps you engage the big muscles and big muscles create the smooth movements we are striving for.

9- Keep your head down in position after you have hit the putt for a second or two. This will help your putt stay on the line that you chose.

10- Always practice outside. We are working on your eyes, hands, sense of feel, and understanding how these relate to the grass and contours of the green. You will not get the same experience if you use an inside putting matt. Practice, practice, practice! Don't get too bogged down with mechanics. You are building up your level of experience and developing your awareness of your senses and feel.



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