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# Golf Swing Secrets and Lies

The following is based on excerpts from my new book *Golf Swing Secrets ... and Lies*, due out the fall of 1998.

The game of golf attracts people to it for many reasons, one of them being that at first it really does not appear to be all that difficult to play. After all, the young and not so young both play, the tall and short play, people with and without sports backgrounds play. It has also had world-class players from every corner of the world and of every physical size. The game seems to say, "Come one, come all."

After people start to play, their original impressions of how easy the game and swing appeared to be soon change. "What's wrong?" "It looks so easy." "They make such smoother swings, I should be able to do that." "Anybody should be able to play a reasonable game." Everyone sooner or later discovers it's a bit of a journey from where they start to where they would like to be in golf, and everyone also discovers this journey is filled with secrets and lies.

Perhaps by changing the approach that's being used to learn and improve, it would also change the results golfers now receive for their efforts.

## GOLF'S FIRST SECRET:

Sound instruction is not telling people how to play or swing. As with a sound approach to learning any subject, sound golf instruction can only help people discov-

er and define for themselves what is relevant and what is not, about the skill they are trying to learn. Sound instruction is not based on someone else's how-to-do-it approach.

## GOLF'S FIRST LIE:

Any belief that someone else has the secret to better golf for our swing and game. Unfortunately, it seems everyone has some secret that sooner or later turns out to be a lie. This, or any other book (or instructor for that matter) cannot really improve your golf, only you can.

What this book can do is change your perception of the information you now use to play or improve your golf, and as we know, a new perception is often where long-term learning starts for a golfer who has been sitting on a plateau without seeing progress for awhile.

Some of the information in *Golf Swing Secrets ... and Lies* will discuss the golf swing in detail. The information is based on what I call the game's physical basics. These basics are non-negotiable, and have been the same for every golfer dating back to the very first day that people started to swing and play golf. The physical basics are presented to give readers new insights and perceptions, not to tell anyone how they must swing and play. That can really become self-evident when the physical basics are used as a guide.

When golfers are trying to fix their broken swings and game, they are open to being told what to do. Just go to

any driving range and watch. *Golf Swing Secrets ... and Lies* will ask readers to become more aware and will not be telling people how to do anything per se. By being asked to become more aware and rely more on yourself and your own capacity to develop insights you have not had in the past can lead to long-term learning.

## SECRET

If people are going to make progress in golf, it is important that they believe in themselves and their own capacity to learn and improve, and not in some system or the latest instruction ideas!

### WHAT TYPE OF LESSON SHOULD YOU TAKE?

Lessons in life, school, and golf can come in many forms. In golf, they can come from books, magazines, videos, private and group lessons, golf schools, etc. But perhaps the first decision any golfer should make is not where or who their lesson should come from, but what type of instruction they want to take.

- Are golf lessons an opportunity for golf instructors to tell and show students all they know, or an opportunity for instruction to provide and support a personal learning environment?
- Are golf lessons an opportunity to have someone tell you what you must learn or an opportunity for someone to help you gain some insights you did not have in the past, so you can see for yourself what must be learned?
- Are golf lessons an opportunity for someone to tell you what you must do, or an opportunity to create a setting where a golfer can discover for themselves what they can do?
- Are golf lessons an opportunity for the mind of one person to make suggestions and demands on the body of another, or an opportunity for the mind of the golfer to gain insight on moving the club and their own body, that they did not have in the past?
- Should golf lessons be, "How-to-do-it advice," or "Support for self-discovery"?

For years, both formal and informal golf instruction (books, magazines, TV tips, professional instructors, and friends) have been trying to help golfers improve, but perhaps golf instruction should be helping golfers learn how to help themselves improve (there really is a huge difference).

## SECRET

It has been well documented that self-discovery is the best road to any long-term learning, with first-hand personal experience and learning going hand in hand. Your goal should be to develop and improve your perception, awareness, and self-discovery skills. Improving these skills is the first stage of any long-term progress with your golf, and if you do not believe this, you will not reach your potential.

Perception of information is where learning and decisions have their start. How we see, hear, and feel information can prevent, slow down or lead to progress. By stepping away from conventional tips and advice into self-discovery alternatives, long-term progress becomes possible.

- (A) Self-discovery requires being aware.
- (B) Being aware leads to new perception.
- (C) New perceptions lead to new concepts.
- (D) New concepts can lead to long-term progress.

## SECRET

People should reconceptualize current information (if it is valid) and use new perceptions, not necessarily be looking for new information every time they are not happy with their golf.

### SEQUENCE OF INFORMATION

While it is recognized that poor concepts and perceptions can slow down the progress golfers are capable of making, there is another very important area. Sequence of information, when improved, opens a path to learning players may not be on. The sequence in which information is presented and gathered is as important to progress as the information that is being used (equally important!).

Valuable information when presented or gathered out of sequence, or you could say, before or after the most useful time is of less value than it could be. Example: gathering

information about the backswing before posture and alignment was taken into consideration would slow down progress. Another example: The elements of sound balance and swing timing will be discussed in this book before moving on to golf swing elements. If balance and swing timing are not what they should be, any efforts put into improving the swing go unrewarded.

The most valuable sequence, first presents information that is clearly the foundation for the next piece of your golf game's puzzle. When information is gathered and presented randomly it then sits by itself without a foundation, and is also not leading to the next logical element of the swing or game to be learned. Golfers who have a swing that is below their level of potential, in many cases have built that swing without a sound sequence of information, and now are using a motion that is out of sequence.

## SECRET

We learned letters before words, words before sentences, sentences before paragraphs and so on. This kind of sequence provides both a foundation for the next piece of information, and leads logically down a path of long-term learning that provides long-term fulfillment. Something that using out of sequence golf information cannot offer.

### WHAT MAKES IT WORK?

Almost from the first day someone starts to play golf, most golfers started to gather some type of information (from books, lessons, friends, magazines, etc.) about the golf swing. For some, that's years of gathering, for others the time may be shorter. But I'm sure many of these players know enough information about the swing to write a few articles about it that would be considered worthwhile reading even by the most harsh critics.

If what I have just written has some truth to it, why then are so many golfers not reaching their potential? My answer, maybe they know something about the swing, but have little knowledge of what makes it work.

Have you ever asked what makes a golf swing work? Or have you just gathered information about the swing? There is a difference.

Perhaps the first element that can make a golf swing work is freedom. World-class golfers have developed a style and swing that is free to move. If and when there is any tension in their bodies, it is never at the cost of a free-moving swing and club. At the foundation of golf is motion (the player, club, and ball all move) and the foundation of motion is freedom of motion.

Other elements that make a golf swing work are sound posture, alignment, and grip for the shot at hand.

The next element that makes a golf swing work is optimum ball location for the shot at hand. (Where the ball is located between the feet and away from the body at address.)

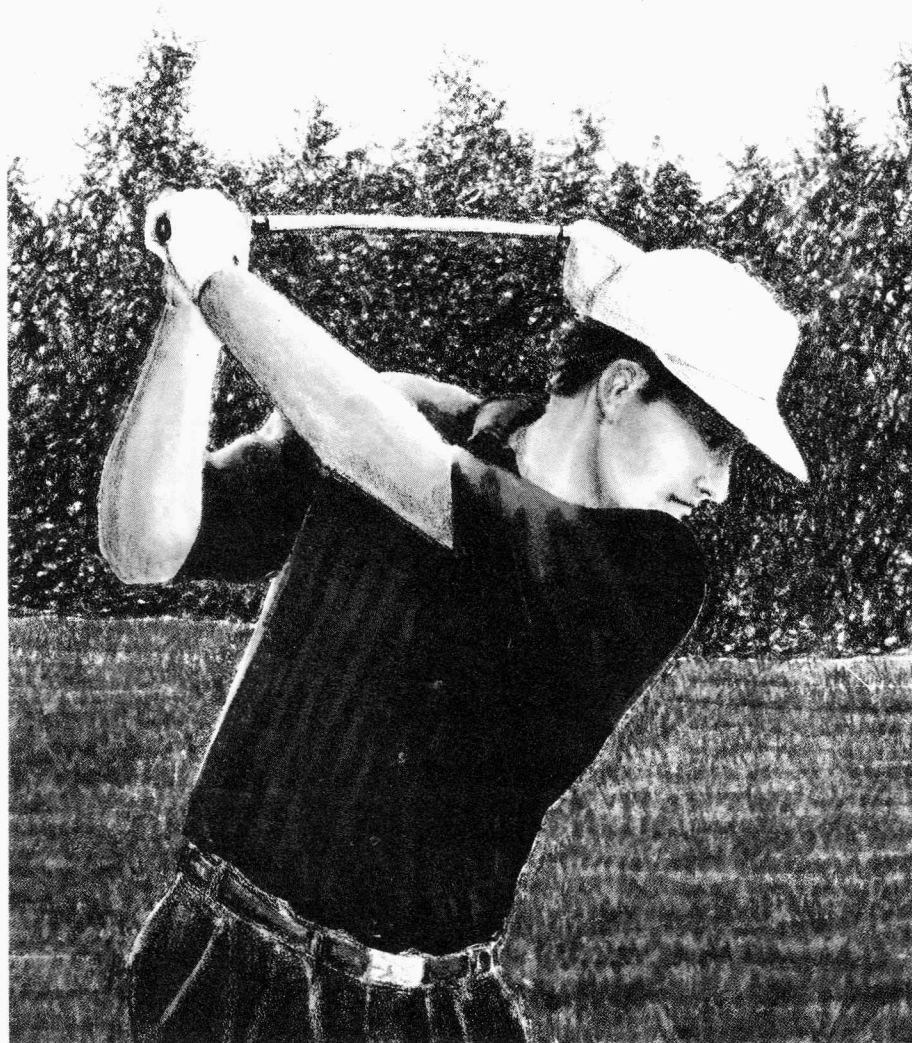


Illustration by Chuck Werle.

The elements of sound balance and swing timing make a golf swing work. The players on the IPGA, PGA, and Senior PGA Tours all have somewhat individual swings, but there is a common ground when it comes to their balance and swing timing.

Next, the elements of sound balance and swing timing make a golf swing work. Just watch players on the LPGA, PGA, and Senior PGA Tours. You will notice all swings are somewhat individual, but there is common ground when it comes to their balance and swing timing.

Of course a set of clubs that fit a player's swing and body style can help make a golf swing work.

At times both players and instruction information have focused on the golf swing at the cost of what makes the golf swing work. There is a good chance if the grip, posture, alignment, ball location, balance, and swing timing, are all sound, and the player is using clubs and a shaft that fit their swing and body style, there will not be much to talk or think about when it comes to the swing. 0

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