

# Golf Tips

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## Volume Two

# 50 Tips that will improve your game

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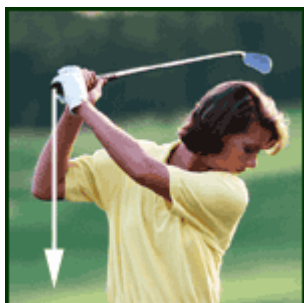
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### Tip 1: Putting Games



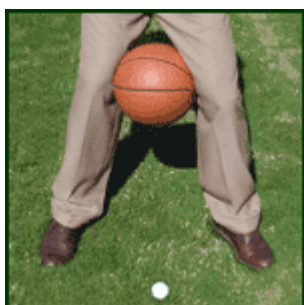
Need work on your short putts? One of my favorite drills is to putt to a dime—it's great for improving focus and concentration! Another favorite putting drill is to sink five in a row from one foot, then from two feet, then three feet, and so on. Miss one? Sorry, you have to start over! And you can't go up in distance until you've made all five. That should occupy you until tee time.

### Tip 2: Pull the Rope!



I've found that most people with a [slice problem](#) cut across the ball on the downswing. To learn the correct path for the [club head](#) to follow, think of a rope attached to a tree above you. From the top of the backswing, you should feel that you're pulling the rope straight down. This forces the right elbow to stay close to your side. It also gives your stroke the correct inside path, and improves your ability to swing out toward the target rather than across the ball.

### Tip 3: Hold Up the Ball



Many golfers let the left knee collapse toward the right on the backswing. This causes your shoulder to drop, and makes your hips sway and overturn. To fix this, imagine your left knee going out toward the target on the backswing. You should feel tension and stability in both knees. Can't quite get it? Try this: Imagine that you're holding a basketball between your knees. Give it a try, you'll be amazed!

### Tip 4: Be a Hitchhiker



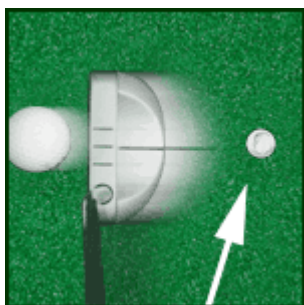
Here's a good image to keep in mind during your backswing: Think of placing your right hand in a "hitchhiker" position. This means that when the club is at waist height, you should be able to look back and see your thumb pointing to the sky. Here's another trick: Imagine that your hand is in a handshake position, with the palm facing neither up nor down. These simple thoughts will ensure the beginning of your swing is correct!

### Tip 5: Pause at the Top



Swinging too quickly is a common mistake. I'm not saying you shouldn't [swing with power and acceleration](#) — but rather, that you need to maintain a rhythm. The best way to accomplish this is to imagine a slight pause at the top of your backswing before changing direction and beginning the downswing. Do this and you'll find your ball in the middle of the fairway more often!

### Tip 6: Eye on a Dime



Feeling depressed over your putting? Here's a simple drill that will put discipline back in your stroke. Place the ball atop a dime, then keep your eyes focused on the dime all the way through your stroke. Avoid the urge to follow the ball with your eyes immediately after impact—especially on short putts. Just watch for the dime, rather than following the ball with your eyes, head, and shoulders.

### Tip 7: See Yourself in the Clubface



One of the keys to getting out of greenside bunkers is to keep the clubface "open." When you close the face, you get a lower trajectory and the club tends to dig in the sand. Here's a trick to help you achieve this: Imagine that the clubface is a mirror, and that you're going to see your reflection in it at the finish of your sand shot. This will ensure that you take the club all the way to eye level and that you've kept it open all the way to the finish. Good luck!

### Tip 8: Check Your Vs!



Many things can [cause a slice](#), but most often the grip is the source of the trouble. Here's how to fix it: Make sure that when looking down at address, you can see the first two knuckles of your left hand and a "V" formed between the thumb and forefinger pointing toward your right shoulder. With the right hand, have the "V" pointing toward your chin or slightly to the right shoulder. It works!

### Tip 9: Bullseye!



Three-foot putts can really mess with your mind if you let them. One strategy employed by one of the all time great putters, Seve Ballesteros, is to imagine a bullseye attached to the back of the cup. This image encourages you to accelerate the putter through to the hole and keep the clubface moving square to the hole. Try it!

### Tip 10: Shoulder Under Chin—You Won't Hit it Thin!



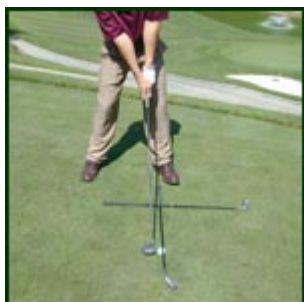
Do you suffer from topping the ball or "[hitting it thin](#)?" Try to get in the habit of placing your right shoulder under your chin before looking for where the ball goes. This doesn't mean to keep your head down forever. Let your head move, but let your shoulder be what brings it up after contact. Do this properly and you'll almost see the club hit the ball. Try it!

### Tip 11: Step on It!



The best way to practice a good weight shift is to step with your right foot over the left after you hit the ball. You should feel as if you're walking right after contact. After each swing, ask yourself: "Where is the weight?" Is it on the right foot, or the left? A proper, balanced position should be 90% on the left foot, and 10% on the right toe. From there, your momentum will naturally carry you to the walking position with right over left, as shown here.

### Tip 12: Hit Far with the Ball Forward



Your position over the ball should vary according to the club you're using. For instance, the ball should be in the middle of your stance with the shorter irons (7, 8, 9, PW). As the loft of the club decreases, the ball should be incrementally farther toward the front foot, until it's just inside the left heel when hitting the [woods](#). Also, remember that if you want to purposely hit lower shots, the ball should be back in the stance. For higher shots, it should be forward.

### Tip 13: Rock-Solid Right Knee



On the backswing, it's crucial to keep weight on the inside of the right foot, and maintain a slight bend in the knee. Failure to do this can mean poor contact and a loss of power. As you take the club back, imagine that the right knee is braced and solid like a wall. This helps your upper body coil behind the ball, so you can make an aggressive move through it-- and really send it flying!

### Tip 14: Grip it Light on the Right



In general, you need to keep the right side solid for a strong shot. But don't let this carry through to your grip. Many golfers tend to grip the club too tightly with the right hand, which leads to unnecessary tension. It can also make you swing "over the top" and cut across the ball. Here's the fix: Check your right-side grip, arm, and shoulder tension before each swing. You should sense that have muscle tension corresponding to a "6" or "7" on a scale of 1-10: [Light muscles](#) are better than tight muscles!

### Tip 15: Muscle It!



Golf isn't a wrist game. To achieve a powerful swing, you need to employ the [big muscles](#) of the legs and trunk. The common instinct of many amateurs is to hit at the ball with only the arms and wrists. Every once in a while this may connect, but for real consistency and power, use the whole body, not just part of it. Muscle it!

### Tip 16: Go Crosshand



One common error in putting is a breakdown of the wrists. Try using a "crosshand" grip. To do this, place the left hand down the grip where the right hand would normally be, and put the right hand atop the grip. This may feel odd at first, but it forces the hands to work as a unit, which is one of the fundamentals of good putting. And remember: Always keep the hands in front of the ball during the stroke, and the left wrist flat!

**Tip 17: "Splash" Some Sand**



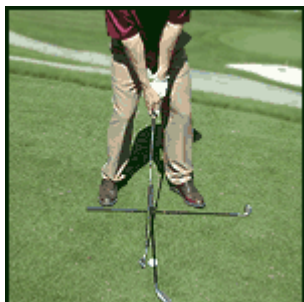
Next time you're in a bunker, focus on sliding a thin "divot" of sand from under the ball and onto the green. Open the clubface a few degrees (clockwise) and line up slightly to the left. "Splash" the sand toward the target and the ball will follow!

**Tip 18: Putt with Your Eyes Closed!**



Can you play golf with your eyes closed? You'd be surprised. By practicing putts with your eyes shut, it's easier to feel body movements. You should sense your shoulders working like a pendulum. Next thing, you'll hear the ball hitting the bottom of the cup!

**Tip 19: Hit Low Into the Wind**



Many players feel that they need to hit it harder into a breeze, but this causes them to put more spin on the ball and hit it higher. To hit it lower and more controlled, put the ball back in your stance a few inches and keep your hands forward. Use a longer club than you would otherwise, and swing easy. Remember the old saying, "Swing with ease into the breeze."

**Tip 20: Wiggle Your Toes**



Over time, many golfers move farther from the ball at address. Be sure that you're not reaching for the ball or putting too much weight on the balls of your feet. Here's a test for this that many pros are fond of: Wiggle your toes at address! This ensures that you aren't placing too much weight on the forward part of the foot.

### Tip 21: Don't Choke it to Death!



Many golfers think they have to grip it hard to hit it hard. Actually, a tense muscle is a slow muscle! Clubhead speed is crucial for distance, and light muscles can work faster. On a scale of 1-10, try to attain a grip pressure of 5 or 6. Grip it light to hit it far!

### Tip 22: Weight Distribution is Vital When Chipping



One key to consistently getting the ball up and down is proper weight distribution. Keep at least 60% of your weight on the front foot at address (left foot for right-handed golfers). Think of hitting slightly down and through the ball. This will encourage a good weight transfer and, in turn, help complete the follow-through. Keep the back of the left wrist facing the target and don't let it break down. That's crucial. Otherwise, your shots will break down as well!

### Tip 23: Use Club Loft to Your Advantage



When trying to get the ball airborne, hit down and through it. By allowing the [club's loft](#) to do the work, you'll achieve good contact, resulting in a natural flight path. Remember, golf clubs have loft for a reason--use it to your advantage!

### Tip 24: Keep Your Head Still!



A still head is crucial to solid contact and consistent putting. Focus on keeping your head still well after impact. Head movement causes the shoulders to open and your putter to cut across the ball. Also, try putting with your eyes closed. You'll be amazed at the results!

### Tip 25: The Toe is Your Best Friend



Downhill putts tend to be fast and difficult. Try doing what many pros do: Hit the ball on the toe of the putter, not on the [sweetspot](#). This tends to "deadend" the jump on the ball and stops it from going way past the hole. Don't do this on uphill putts though!

### Tip 26: Bowl Your Way to Better Putting



Are you having trouble with putting distance control? Try rehearsing a few strokes without a putter while standing in a golf-like address position. Now, take a ball in your hand--or just imagine you are going to roll the ball toward the hole. When you think you have good feel for how hard to roll it, put the putter back in your hand and use the same motion to hit the ball.

### Tip 27: Putt to the Pro Side of the Cup



When lining up breaking putts, pros will always favor the "high" side of the hole rather than the "low" side. The law of averages tells you that as a putt is breaking near the hole, gravity works in your favor if the ball is above the hole. If the ball is breaking away on the low side, gravity works against you. It's pretty simple--remember the pro side, not the low side, and you'll make more putts!

### Tip 28: Swing Easy When It's Breezy



When you're playing in the wind, a simple but very good thought is "swing with ease into the breeze." This thought helps keep you from over swinging in the wind and, in turn, prevent your ball from sailing too high. Greg Norman said he used this one on his way to winning the 1994 British Open.

### Tip 29: Solidify Your Swing's Foundation



A consistent golf swing requires a smooth tempo and good balance. Just as a house needs a solid foundation, so does your golf swing. Practice hitting some shots with your feet close together (about six inches apart). This forces you to maintain better balance, tempo, and rhythm and will prove effective when you go back to hitting from your normal stance.

### Tip 30: Turn Your Way to More Distance



The key to hitting a golf ball a long way is minimizing your hip turn and maximizing your shoulder turn. The easiest way to accomplish this is to make sure that your left knee doesn't slide to the right on the backswing and that the right knee stays firm and flexed throughout. (Opposite knee for left-handed players.) Also, get your shoulder behind the ball at the top of the backswing. This ensures good weight shift and allows for a longer swing.

### Tip 31: Release is the Key to Distance



To improve distance, you must have a proper hand release in the swing. Take a short backswing and stop when your club and hands are about waist high. Look as though you are shaking hands with your thumb pointing up in the air. As you swing down into the follow through, make sure your hands are doing the same thing that they did on the backswing (thumb up). This technique ensures that you use your hands properly.

### Tip 32: Swing through the Ball, Not at It



[Consistent, powerful swings](#) usually have one thing in common--extension through the ball after hitting it. A good way you can learn to perfect this is to put a tee about eight inches in front of the ball you are hitting. Make an effort to hit not only the ball but also the tee. This will help to train you to swing through the ball, not at it.

### Tip 33: Make a Smooth Transition



Many weekend golfers start their downswing with a tense, violent motion, ruining their chance of making solid contact. The top of the swing is a critical transition point and should quietly lead into a smooth downswing. Thinking "light and lazy" at the top is a good strategy to promote this feeling.

### Tip 34: Remember, It's Just a Game



We all play golf to have fun. It's important to remember that. Yet, too often, we're anxious about performance. You can still try hard and concentrate on your swing, but just don't let the pursuit of perfection consume you. Otherwise, performance anxiety might hamper the freedom of your swing and spirit. Golf is just a game. In the bigger scheme of life, it doesn't matter much. Taking this attitude to the first tee allows your performance and comfort level to rise.

### Tip 35: Avoid Over Analysis Paralysis



All these tips don't mean a thing if you become too tense and analytical. Sure there's a strong desire to improve, but you've also got to be able to relax. After a practice session or even on the course, hit a percentage of your shots just being target oriented. This means just look at where you want the ball to go, think positively, and let it go. In other words, just grip the club and fire away!

### Tip 36: Take It Back Low and Slow



Amateurs have a tendency to take the club back too quickly with the wrists. This reduces proper extension and gets the swing off plane. Here's a great drill to help you get the proper feel for the take-away. First, get into your normal address position, and then place or drop a ball behind your clubhead. As you initiate the backswing, roll the ball backward. Continue rolling the ball until it is well past your right foot (left foot for left-handed players). When doing this properly, you'll feel the opposite shoulder move under your chin. You'll also realize how straight the left arm (right arm for left-handed players) should be when taking then backswing.

### Tip 37: Pass the Pole for More Distance



If you want maximum distance and consistency, use a proper weight shift. Imagine a pole coming vertically out of the ground where the ball is resting at address. Make it your goal to get your left shoulder behind the ball and the imaginary pole on the takeaway--without swaying the hips. This ensures a good position to initiate your downswing. On the follow-through, your right shoulder should move past the ball and imaginary pole. When you do this correctly, you not only make a good turn, but a good weight shift as well.

### Tip 38: Improve Your Balance and Game



When you're having problems making good contact, it's often because you start to sway, lose balance, and stop turning. One of the best drills to help cure this problem is to hit balls with your feet about six inches apart. Start out by hitting shots with short swings. This drill promotes [good footwork, balance, and a free swing with the arms](#). Also, it forces you to turn more; otherwise, you'll fall over! When you feel as though you're making good contact, increase the length of your swings.

### Tip 39: Make a Steep Swing in the Sand



This drill helps you get a feel for taking the club back in a more upright plane out of the bunker. By taking the club back more abruptly, you increase your chances of getting under the ball properly and impacting the sand more precisely. Have a friend stand behind you in the sand and place a rake about two feet behind your ball--holding it in approximately a 45-degree angle. The goal here is to get you to swing up the rake handle and feel as though your plane is steeper than that of a normal swing. Take several swings like this and soon you'll hit high, soft shots from the bunker.

### Tip 40: Remember the Practice Area



The practice area is the first place any pro golfer goes to before heading to the first tee in a tournament. You too should develop this routine. Remember, the practice area isn't a place to worry too much about how you're striking the ball. Instead, it's a place to [warm up and loosen your muscles](#). When you're ready to hit, start with a wedge and work your way down the set to the driver. Eventually, finish with a few wedges. This promotes good tempo and feel, which are vital to striking the ball correctly. It can even prevent injury!

### Tip 41: Learn to Stay Flexible



One of the most common complaints I hear about is a loss of flexibility and a resulting poor turn (photo). My favorite drill for this is what I call the hip blocker. When you fix the knees, it forces the upper body to turn much more correctly and slowly increases flexibility. As you swing, remember to turn the shoulders as far back as you can until the left shoulder is under your chin. In doing this, you'll feel a greater stretch along your left side. Finish by doing the same thing on the follow-through, but with the

right shoulder under the chin. In time, you'll increase your ability to coil fully without using the hips. Remember, power is stored in the swing as a result of a big shoulder turn combined with a minimal hip turn.

### Tip 42: Increase Your Forearm Strength



Left wrist and forearm strength are critical to golf success. So often I see the left wrist breaking down through impact, being dominated by the right arm. This causes many ills including topping, loss of distance, and pulling shots to the left. One [great strengthening drill](#) for this problem requires you to hold the club straight out in front of you using the last three fingers of the left hand. Next, using your wrists, move the club up and down 10-12 times. Three slow controlled sets without bending the arm will train the

proper motion into your muscle memory.

### Tip 43: Start at the Top



The real secret to hitting straighter, more-consistent shots is to have a square clubface at impact. If your clubface connects squarely with the ball, your shots fly straight. It's that simple! One way to promote a square clubface at impact is to have one at the top of the backswing. If you're not square at the top, you have to manipulate the club in some way to make it square at impact. This can lead to all kinds of timing problems. Here's a good drill that teaches you how to play from a square position. With a club in hand,

lift your arms just up to the forehead, and then rotate the shoulders as far as possible, allowing a full backswing. This sets your hands in a square position at the top and encourages a full turn. If you can hold this position for a few seconds, it helps ingrain the proper feeling that you should have at the top of the swing.

#### Tip 44: Act Like a Baseball Player



A golf swing requires a controlled but aggressive weight shift. Still, some players get stuck on the right foot and never fully shift, causing many of the typical bad-shot blues. Try teeing a ball and taking your normal address position. Now, bring the left foot back so the feet are about 6 inches apart. Take a normal backswing, but just as you begin down, step forward as though you are a home run hitter stepping into a pitch. To hit the ball solidly, you might need to tone down the swing a bit. This not only

gives you a real feeling of shifting, but it also trains you to repeat it.

#### Tip 45: Stabilize Your Left Knee



Longer hitters have a significant discrepancy between hip turn and shoulder turn. The place for a big hip turn is on the follow-through, not the backswing! One important body part that affects what the hips do is the left knee. When it collapses or bends inward, the hips are able to turn too much, making it impossible to create the necessary torque required to build [clubhead](#) speed. To improve this, simply feel the left knee staying out toward the target at the top of the backswing. This keeps some

distance between the knees.

#### Tip 46: Turn and Burn



There's a simple way to give you the feeling of a proper shoulder turn without the hips getting too involved, as they often do. Sit on the edge of a golf cart (or in a similar position). Put a club on the line of your shoulders as if you're simulating address. Now, simply turn back and try to get the shaft pointing straight in front of you. You'll find quite a stretch in the left side, which is good. This helps you get behind the ball better and results in a few more yards.

#### Tip 47: Dirty Those Shoes



I can often size up a student by looking at shoes. If the shoes have been around a while and the right toe is totally clean, there's a problem. When the weight shifts properly, you'll end up balanced on the right toe. Over time, this wears down that toe. Make an effort to get that right toe dirty and beat up! That tells me your [weight is shifting properly](#).

### Tip 48: Point Your Way to Consistency



What the hands do directly affects the clubface position, which affects the ball's flight. With a normal stance, take your grip but point your finger down the shaft so it's pointing at the ball at address. Check the club when it's parallel to the ground on both the backswing and follow-through. The finger should point down the target line on the way back and at the target on the way through. This is also a great tip if you're confused about how it should feel to release your hands properly.

### Tip 49: Use Both Sides



For many players, the left arm and side are weak and dominated by the right side on the downswing and through impact. This right-side dominance leads to poor extension and many other swing flaws. To ingrain a proper feel, swing lightly with the left arm only. As you do this, check how the arm extends freely through the [impact zone](#). Now, add the right arm with a light grip and try to maintain the extended feeling you just had. You'll immediately feel it getting more restricted, but let it go and keep using that left

arm and side along with the right. You've got two sides—use them both!

### Tip 50: Swing inside the Barrel



Often times, golfers will make their stance wider and wider. While this is good for stability, it also allows for lateral movement, which can turn into a sway. One of my favorite drills is what I call the barrel drill. Start by keeping the stance approximately shoulder width apart. Now imagine you have two straight lines coming out of the ground outside your heels. You'll notice this allows for some lateral movement but, usually, a full turn is required in order not to hit the lines. Picture yourself swinging in the barrel and watch for some low scores.