



IMG ACADEMY

GUIDE TO BETTER GOLF

Letter from
Kevin Craggs,
Director of Golf

G.A.S.P.
GRIP.
ALIGNMENT.
STANCE.
POSTURE.

HOOKS

SLICES

SHANKS

LACK OF POWER

OVER-SWINGING

"Golf fundamentals aren't just for beginners. Sure, golfers new to the game obviously need to establish the correct foundation from which to work, but even the most skilled and seasoned golfers sometimes need to get back to the most seemingly "simple" of technical adjustments. And, that's why we've created this guide. From the grip to stance and common swing issues, this guide will help you diagnose faults and provide you with simple fixes, whether you're a scratch golfer or a 20-handicapper"

Kevin Craggs

DIRECTOR OF GOLF, IMG ACADEMY

Craggs brings more than three decades of both playing and coaching experience to the role. After playing on various European tours for several years as a PGA Professional, Craggs shifted to a coaching profession. Notably, he was the Scottish National Team Coach and continued to build his career developing golfers of all levels, from juniors to professionals on both the European and U.S. tours. Craggs continues to work with the likes of World Golf Hall of Famer Colin Montgomerie, 2010 U.S. Open Champion and IMG Academy alumna Paula Creamer, and many others.

WELCOME TO IMG ACADEMY'S

GUIDE TO BETTER GOLF



GRIP

The **grip** is one of the keys to controlling the clubface, and, therefore, it is important to take the time to get it right. Your grip should be comfortable and consistent, whereby both hands can be placed onto the club in a repeated way. The more neutral you can make the grip, the less compensations you need elsewhere in the swing.



WEAK GRIP



OPEN CLUBFACE



STRONG GRIP



CLOSED CLUBFACE

WEAK GRIP

Opposite to the strong grip, both or one of the hands are too far over to the left. This can cause the clubface to arrive back to the ball in an open position, leading to shots that start right and continue curving to the right again depending on the direction of the club path.

OUTCOMES

Push – Ball starts and stays straight right

Push, Fade, or Slice – Ball starts right and curves further right

Pull, Fade, or Slice – Ball starts left and curves right



NEUTRAL GRIP



SQUARE CLUBFACE

STRONG GRIP

Both or one of the hands are placed too far over to the right which can lead to the clubface arriving back to the ball in a closed position. This often causes shots to start left and continue curving to the left, depending on the direction of the club path.

OUTCOMES

Pull – Ball starts and stays straight left

Pull, Draw or Hook – Ball starts left and curves further left

Push, Draw, or Hook – Ball starts right and curves to the left

NEUTRAL GRIP

A neutral grip provides better stability of the clubface, giving greater consistency to flight and strike. The V's formed between the thumb and index finger of both hands should point somewhere between the chin and right shoulder. If the hands are aligned correctly, you should see two knuckles on the left hand with the right hand covering the left thumb.

OUTCOMES

The Ball Flight – The face sends it, and the path bends it.

KEY REMINDERS

1. Keep the grip pressure light.
2. The grip controls the clubface which controls the ball's initial start line.
3. Neutral grip = two knuckles on the left hand and the right hand covering the left thumb

“Golf begins with a good grip.”

– Ben Hogan

ALIGNMENT

The golf swing revolves around the setup, and aligning yourself correctly is a key component to playing consistent golf. As Sir Nick Faldo once said, "It is no good having a perfect grip and perfect golf swing if the whole thing is aiming in the wrong direction." Taking the time to ensure your feet, knees, hips, and shoulders are all aligned correctly can be the difference between scoring well or not.

CLOSED

The term *closed* means you are aiming your body too far to the right. If you have a tendency to aim right, a simple solution is to step into the ball with your right hand and right foot first whilst looking at the target. This immediately opens the left side of the body up, making it more difficult to aim right. As you place your left hand and left foot into position, keep the feeling of the left side being open.

OPEN

Open means the body is aligned too far to the left, and, in some cases, this can be less destructive than aiming too far right. However, both bring their own challenges to controlling ball flight. To cure the problem of aiming too far left, step into the ball with your left hand and left foot first whilst looking at the target. As you place your right hand and right foot into position, keep your focus on the target.

SQUARE

The best way to refine your alignment is to use alignment sticks on the ground to help calibrate your aim and follow a consistent process. First, stand behind the ball, and pick a spot just in front of the ball between the target and ball. Place the club behind the ball, aligning it to the chosen spot. As you build your stance around the club, ensure your feet, knees, hips, and shoulders are all aligned square to the clubface.

KEY REMINDERS

1. Build your alignment around the clubface
2. The swing revolves around the setup - "You can't fire a canon from a canoe."
3. Practice with alignment sticks on the ground to calibrate your aiming.

STANCE

The **stance** plays a huge part in influencing the strike and flight of a golf ball and involves three key aspects: width of stance, ball position, and weight distribution. If either of the three is out of position, inconsistent outcomes are inevitable. Taking the time to ensure your stance is correct is key to developing consistency, and, therefore, following a simple routine will allow you to stand to the ball the same every time.



ROUTINE

Start with your feet together, placing the club directly behind the ball and aimed at your intended target. No matter what club you are using, ensure the ball is aligned opposite the center of the feet. Pay attention that you are standing in balance with the weight slightly favoring the balls of the feet.



STANCE

The next stage of the routine is to take a step to the left with your left foot, and, depending on what club you are using will depict how far left you go. Remember, the position of your left foot will determine where the ball is located in your stance.

A simple guideline would be:

Driver and longer clubs = small step left
Mid to short irons = medium step left

BALL POSITION

Once the left foot is in place and the correct ball position has been aligned, the final part to the routine is to step to the right with the right foot, so the center of your feet are now wider than shoulder width. It is important that you avoid standing too wide, as this will restrict lower body movement or too narrow as this will affect your balance and stability.

KEY REMINDERS

1. **STANCE WIDTH** - The center of your feet should be the same width as your shoulders.
2. **BALL POSITION** - Left of center for the longer clubs and middle for the mid to short clubs.
3. **WEIGHT** - Be in balance with the weight favoring the balls of the feet.

POSTURE

Posture is often one of the most overlooked areas within the setup. However, it is probably one of the most important as it provides the foundation for a consistent swing. It allows you to rotate around a constant axis, affording the club to move up and down on the correct track. Remember, it is almost impossible to make a good swing from a poor posture.



WARNING - Standing too close to the ball

Standing too close or too tall to the ball allows little room for the club to swing through impact. The consequences of this kind of posture are the hands will have a tendency to swing the club up and away from the body, causing a steep, upright position in the backswing. As there is little room to swing down, the club will then move over the top, causing an out to in swing path invariably leading to weak shots curving to the right.

WARNING - Standing too far away from the ball

Standing too far away from the ball or being slumped over it is more common than you might think. Many amateurs make the mistake of reaching out for the ball, pulling the body too far over. This kind of posture tends to lead to very flat, rounded backswings that causes the club to return back to the ball from either too much from the inside, leading to pushes or hooks, or from over the top, causing slices and pulls. Either way, it is hard to control the flight and direction of the ball from this position.

Standing Dynamic to the ball

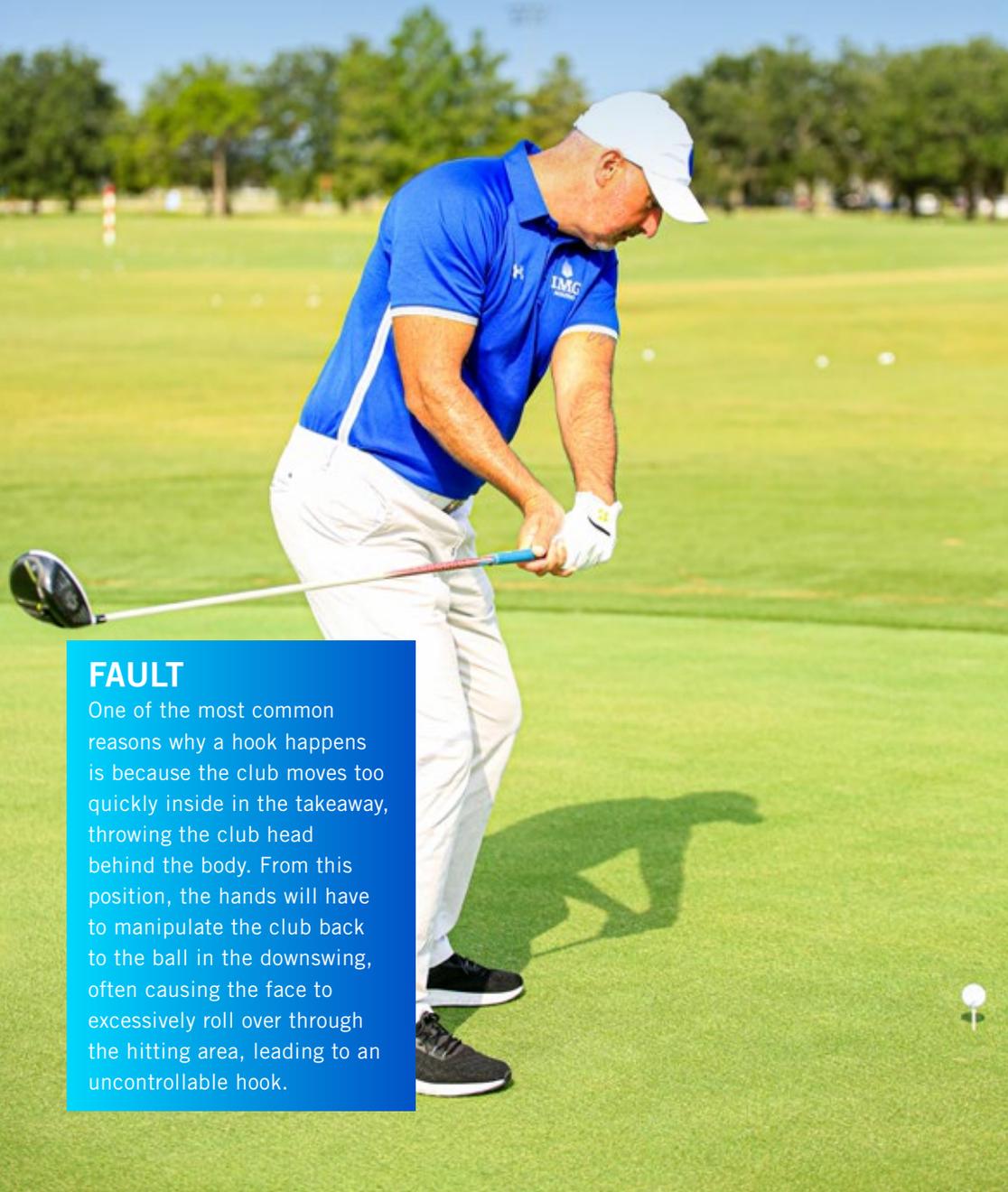
Your best golf is played when you are in balance both mentally and technically. To achieve an athletic posture, follow these three steps. First, tilt towards the ball from your hip joints, not your waist. The difference is subtle, but bending from the waist causes the back to get rounded. Second, the front of your shoulders should be just over the toes with the arms directly hanging down. Third, flex your knees so that the front of them sits over the center of the feet, avoiding any excessive bend. You have now created a dynamic posture and are in a better position for the club to move around the body.

KEY REMINDERS

1. **BACK POSITION** – Bend over from the hip joint and not the waist
2. **KNEE FLEX** - Front of the knees sits over the center of the feet
3. **HANDS** - Hang down directly from the shoulders

HOOK

The **hook** is a punishing shot that starts right, left, or straight and then viciously curves to the left, often ending up in deep rough or out of bounds, which can lead to a lost ball and reload.



FAULT

One of the most common reasons why a hook happens is because the club moves too quickly inside in the takeaway, throwing the club head behind the body. From this position, the hands will have to manipulate the club back to the ball in the downswing, often causing the face to excessively roll over through the hitting area, leading to an uncontrollable hook.



FIX

There are a number of ways to help cure a hook. However, the most effective is the towel drill. Roll up a small towel, and place it just inside the ball. As you take the club away from the ball, concentrate on keeping the clubhead outside the towel. This will help keep the club moving on the correct path in the early stage of the takeaway.

OUTCOME

After a few swings using the towel and getting the feeling of the club moving away from the ball in a straighter line, you will notice how the club is in a more neutral position with the clubshaft being parallel to the line of the feet. From this position, you are better equipped to continue moving the club to the top of the backswing. However, it is important to mention that, even from a great backswing position, it is still possible to hit a hook unless you keep the club moving on the right path. So, as you swing the club back down to the ball, it is vital that you also avoid hitting the towel. Within a matter of a few swings, you will begin to see the hook disappear, allowing you to hit straighter shots and more fairways.

KEY REMINDERS

1. Keep the clubhead moving straighter back in the takeaway.
2. Ensure your alignment is correct and that you are not aiming too far right.
3. Keep the feeling of the club moving in front of the hands in the downswing.

SLICE

The **slice** is one of the most common faults among the everyday amateur golfer, the ball starts left, right, or sometimes straight and then curves viciously to the right losing valuable distance and often going in the direction of undesirable places.

FAULT

A slice shot generally stems from poor movement of the body and arms in the backswing, causing the club to become too steep in the takeaway. In simple terms, this means picking the club up too quickly in the takeaway, forcing the left arm to rise too high. This motion is often referred to as swinging "too upright." This action contributes to an out-to-in swing path, leading you to hit the ball with a glancing blow with the face open to the path, causing the ball to slice.



FIX

A great drill to help solve your slice and improve the path of your swing is to place a towel directly under both arms. By doing this, you have now created a link between your body and arms which will help give you the feeling of staying more connected. The goal is to swing the club half way back, keeping the towel held under both arms. If at any point you revert back to old ways, the towel will fall out from underneath the arms. You will immediately feel as if you are moving more around the body, as opposed to just lifting the arms up, giving you a better understanding of where you need to be.

OUTCOME

Swapping a slice for a soft draw requires you to improve the direction of your swing path, moving it from an out-to-in action to more of an in-to-out one. Notice that, after a few swings of doing the towel drill, your left arm will feel lower, creating a flatter position at the top of the backswing that is more in line with the shoulder plane. From this position, you can now bring the club down easier and on a shallower, more inside path, allowing you to extend out through impact as opposed to cutting across the ball, which will lead to a more consistent flight and strike.

KEY REMINDERS

1. Keep the connection between the arms and body in the early stages of the backswing.
2. Focus on keeping the right elbow close to the body during the backswing.
3. Make sure the left wrist covers the right shoulder at the top of the backswing.

SHANK

The **shank**, better known as the "unmentionable," is a word only to be whispered amongst golfers, as many fear they might catch the dreaded affliction. It is, without doubt, one of the most destructive shots in golf and one that can affect confidence the quickest.



FAULT

There are a number of reasons that can cause a player to shank. However, in my opinion, the most common reason is because the right shoulder tends to push forward in the down swing, throwing the club outside the intended target line.

This motion forces the heel of the club towards the ball, resulting in the ball abruptly shooting off at a 45-degree angle.

FIX

The easiest way to eliminate a shank from your game is to place a rolled-up towel on the ground just above the ball to create a boundary. It is important that, during the downswing, you focus on keeping the right shoulder behind the left one all the way down to the hitting area. Do not hit or crossover the boundary as this will indicate you have pushed the right shoulder forward and out. When doing this drill, you will occasionally revert back to old habits and may hit the towel which provides you with immediate feedback without damaging you or the club.

OUTCOME

Once you've hit several shots mastering the skill of staying within the boundaries, you will feel the club approaching the ball from a different direction, primarily from the inside which will lead to more strikes finding the center of the club as opposed to the heel. Providing you stay within the boundaries in the downswing, there will no longer be any need for you to cringe whenever you hear someone mention the word shank!

KEY REMINDERS

1. Keep your right shoulder behind your left at the start of the downswing.
2. Stay within your boundaries.
3. Relax the pressure of the grip and forearms.

NO POWER

Lack of power and distance can be very frustrating and make holes play much longer than they really need to be. Having no power is a result of misdirected energy, meaning a lot of effort and energy for very little output.



FAULT

One of the biggest causes to the lack of power and distance is tilting and not turning. This is when the weight moves too much onto the left side of the body during the backswing, forcing the upper body to lean too much towards the target. This kind of movement can lead to a multitude of problems in terms of flight and strike consistency and vastly reduces power and distance.



FIX

The key to eliminating a tilt and introducing the proper weight transfer is to understand how the upper body turns behind the ball in the backswing. A simple but effective drill is to place a club across your chest with the grip end to the left of you. From a strong and stable address position, focus on turning your left shoulder and the grip end behind the ball. Instantly, you will feel more weight loading into your right side with a more powerful upper body turn.

OUTCOME

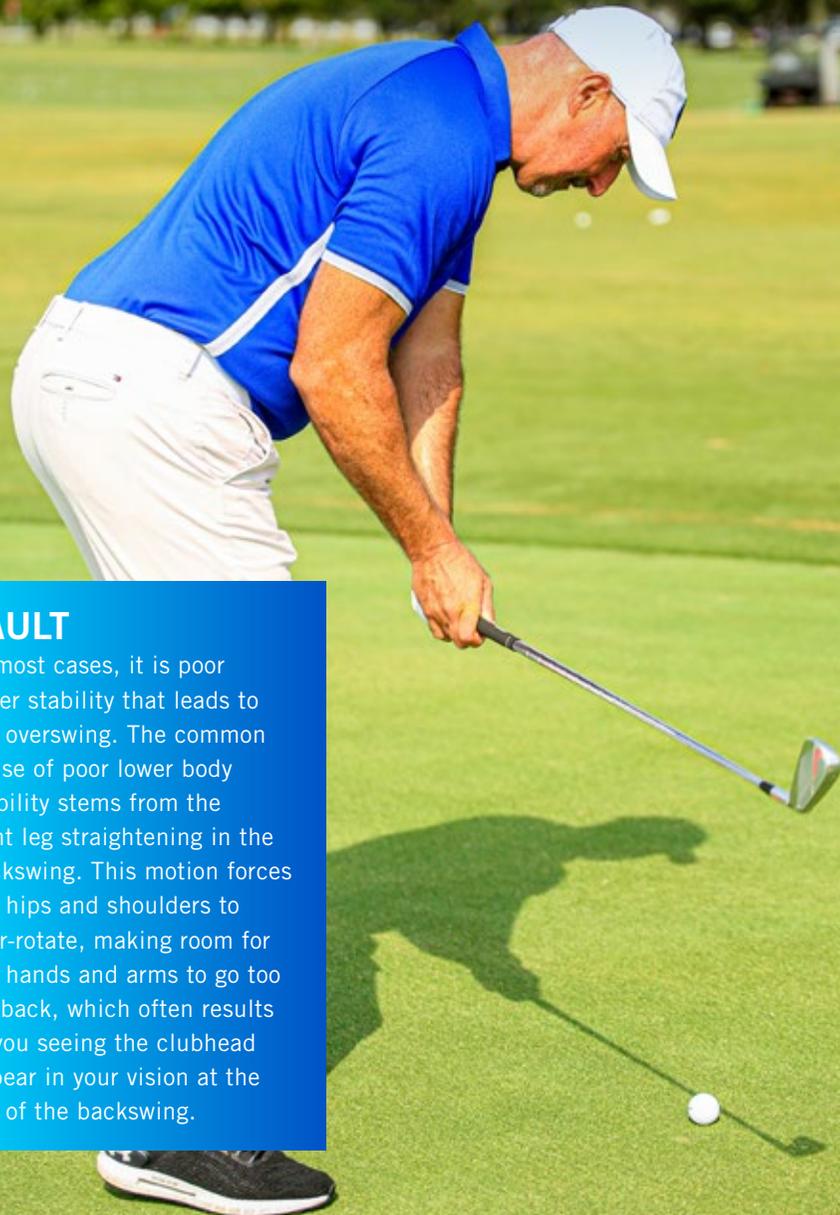
After doing the drill several times and getting the feeling of the weight loading into the right side, hit a few shots while concentrating on turning your left shoulder over your right foot. You can only achieve this by allowing your head to move slightly to the right as you go back. You will be amazed by how much more power can be achieved when moving your weight correctly back and forth in the swing. "Be a turner not a tilter."

KEY REMINDERS

1. Don't restrict your head; allow it to slightly move to the right.
2. Turn your left shoulder towards your right foot.
3. Load your weight into the right side at the top of the backswing.

OVERSWING

Most golfers who suffer from an **overswing** are those who try to knock the dimples off the ball at lightning speed. There is no better feeling than launching a long drive down a tightly-mown fairway. However, to achieve this level of consistency, you need to control your golf swing. Remember, when it comes to driving the ball, less is more.



FAULT

In most cases, it is poor lower stability that leads to the overswing. The common cause of poor lower body stability stems from the right leg straightening in the backswing. This motion forces the hips and shoulders to over-rotate, making room for the hands and arms to go too far back, which often results in you seeing the clubhead appear in your vision at the top of the backswing.



FIX

A simple drill to help improve lower body stability and help shorten the length of your swing is to hit a few shots with your left foot pulled back which forces more pressure onto the right leg. As you swing back, the goal is to focus on maintaining the flex in your right knee and stopping any excessive upper or lower body rotation which, at the same time, reduces the length of the arm swing.

OUTCOME

Improving the stability of the body rotation achieves two key things. Firstly, the length of the arm swing is shorter, meaning the club does not travel as far away from the ball, leading to better strikes. Secondly, the lower and upper body are now in a more coiled position which maximizes power and speed while allowing you to hit the ball further by doing less.

KEY REMINDERS

1. Create a strong and powerful base at address.
2. Focus on maintaining the flex in your right knee during the backswing.
3. Create a powerful coil by pointing your left shoulder at the ball at the top of the backswing.

IMG Academy offers the industry's top golf training for all ages and skill levels. With a data-driven training methodology, cutting-edge technology, experienced coaches, and professional-quality practice and playing facilities, IMG Academy offers an infrastructure that can help any golfer improve their game.

IMG ACADEMY PROGRAMS

Boarding School: Grades 6-12. No academy in the world can match IMG Academy's track record of developing high-performing student-athletes.

Junior Golf Camps: Ages 8-18. Camps are available throughout the year in weekly and multi-week formats.

Adult Golf Programs: Ages 18+. Available packages also include a stay at Legacy Hotel at IMG Academy.

Professional and Collegiate Training: Ages 18+. IMG is the ideal atmosphere for aspiring and current professionals to work on their game.

Group Training: From corporate retreats to team golf trips, we can create a truly unique golfing experience.

