

ROTARY SWING TOUR TRUTHS OF GOLF INSTRUCTION:



***DELIVERING HOPE FOR GOLFERS AND
SALVATION FOR A FAILED INDUSTRY***

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*This mBook is based on the **Truths about Golf Instruction** video series, by Chuck Quinton. The full video series is available at www.RotarySwing.com*



If golf is more than just a game to you, chances are you have already invested time and money in being the most competitive player your natural skills allow. It is almost just as certain that you've been disappointed with the results and may not be able to figure out why it's not working.

Consider for a moment that it's not about you, but about the way you're being trained...

Consider for a moment that the right way is only a few words away...

Read on...

PART 1. MOST GOLF INSTRUCTION IS WORTHLESS.


There is perhaps no other movement in the history of sports that has been studied, evaluated, written and argued more than the basic golf swing. Since that Scottish shepherd used his crook to whack a pebble into a rabbit hole sometime in the 1600s, many of us have been fascinated, indeed obsessed, with the opportunity and challenge of this fantastic game. Whole industries have developed around the sport, fed by the golfer's desire to improve and master a game that can probably never be perfected. The 'perfect' golf swing, the movement that permits optimal performance, has been an elusive goal; one that has led to considerable research, debate, argument and controversy.

The greatest players through the years have been lauded and revered – perceived to be the primary sources of knowledge and expertise. The industry of golf instruction



has typically looked at the best player in the world and attempted to use his swing as a model. Bobby Jones was probably the first *golf superstar*. The early instructors, including Jones' teacher, Stewart Maiden, Ernest Jones, Percy Boomer and Tommy Armour, were all influenced by the way Jones swung the club and played the game.

Perhaps the biggest revolution in golf equipment technology came with the change from hickory shafts to steel. The new shafts were more consistent, stiffer, needed less torque, and made Jones' hands and arms-dominated golf swing technique less effective. Byron Nelson was perhaps the first to change his swing to make use of the improved equipment, using a fuller body turn with greater leg drive to generate more power than was possible with the flexible hickory shafts. For this reason, he is sometimes referred to as the father of the modern golf swing. Sam Snead was another player of this era who maximized leg and body action to hit the ball farther and straighter than many people thought possible.



Everything changed again when Ben Hogan came along. Still recognized as the best ball striker of his day, perhaps of all time, Hogan's swing was radically different to that of Nelson and Snead. It was flatter, more compact, dynamic, and based on a hard rotation of the body rather than the high arm lift and lateral leg drive of his two contemporaries. Hogan's book, *Five Lessons: The Modern Fundamentals of Golf*, changed golf instruction forever. For the next decade and beyond, everyone wanted to copy and teach the Hogan swing model.

The post Hogan era was dominated by one man; Jack Nicklaus. Nicklaus' swing was again very different from Hogan's, reverting back to a higher arm position and a big lateral hip slide. This influenced a new generation of players including Johnny Miller, Tom Weiskopf and Tom Watson. (It is perhaps no coincidence that many of the players who used this swing model have undergone hip replacements as they have advanced in years.) The model of what was being taught changed again; migrating then to Greg Norman's


more compact, rotational swing. Nick Faldo and the first real 'superstar' golf coach, David Leadbetter, promoted a body-dominated movement with a holding off of the hands and arms to hit a very controllable left to right shaped shot. Then along came Tiger Woods with his physically fit, athletic focus on huge power and length off the tee.

The golf instruction industry has changed its definition of the perfect swing and consequently its teaching model. Since it tends to be based on the current dominant player in the world, it changes every five or six years. No wonder there is so much confusion and frustration among non-professional golfers. Despite all the improvements in golf equipment and agronomy, the explosion of available information, swing training guides and manuals, technology such as the video camera and laptop computers, the average handicap is still the same as it was 30 years ago. If the model of the golf swing being taught is based on preferences and opinions, rather than on physics and biomechanics, it is little wonder that so many people find the game so difficult, and painful.

The human body is a wonderful organism. If you give it a task, such as hitting a golf ball, it will find a way to do it. Unfortunately, if your posture is unsuited to that task, and you make repeated inappropriate movements, using the joints and muscles in ways they aren't supposed to be used, damage will occur. Consulting rooms of physiotherapists and chiropractors are filled with golfers who were injured by ill attempts at something that should be enjoyable and good for them!

The various golf coaching and training associations around the world should take a good deal of the blame for the situation. After all, they were largely responsible for training the coaches and instructors staffing golf courses and driving ranges. However, these organizations have two major failings. The first is that they are run mainly for the benefit of their members, rather than the benefit of the golfing public at large. A cynic might suggest that teaching golf is more profitable than simple green fees. The second is most are run by committee. Thus, when the business plan is prepared





and course criteria decided, you may have one member who advocates the Hogan swing and another David Leadbetter's teaching, and yet another who believes that Stack and Tilt theory works best for him.

Naturally a compromise must be found and this often means modification of several styles that then leads to confusion and inconsistencies. So, the newest generation of teaching professionals goes out into the world with a range of options to choose from in terms of what they teach and how they teach it, rather than a proven model and a coaching method that is based in science and that can be shown to be effective.

Other sports have developed their coaching methods using a better-organized and sensible basis. The sports scientists and biomechanics experts started working with athletes in Olympic sports over 30 years ago. You don't see the Olympic rowing or cycling finals with athletes using different methods to propel a boat or bike. The fundamentals are similar. Biomechanical experts have observed the task,

and after comparing it to the known functions of the human body—including the joints and muscles—have come up with a biomechanical model of the best, most efficient way to move in order to accomplish the task. This allows the athlete to develop his or her body in the gym, and practice the movements that achieve the best possible performance of the task.

It is a somewhat damning indictment of the golf instruction industry that, after almost 100 years of the 'modern' game, we still cannot agree on exactly what we should be teaching people and have no real consensus on how we should teach it. Thankfully, with Rotary Swing Tour, a more considered, scientific approach is now coming into golf. We now have an optimum biomechanical model for the fundamental movements of the perfect golf swing. Essentially, we have a proven method of learning and teaching this movement. We also have a recognized goal; that of swinging the club efficiently in terms of our performance and enjoyment, while maintaining physical safety. We now

also have a tried and tested process to allow us to achieve it. These two developments will make learning the game in the future a simpler and more enjoyable experience.



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PART 2. THE SEARCH FOR THE PERFECT GOLF SWING.

“Gentlemen, we are going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it, because nothing is perfect. But we are going to relentlessly chase it, because in the process we will catch excellence.


I am not remotely interested in just being good.”

-Vince Lombardi

Our goal as golfers is to perform to our maximum potential, and in doing so, to get as much enjoyment from the game as possible. For most people this means distance, control, remaining injury-free, and if possible, to look good while doing it. We all want to attain the perfect, optimum, and biomechanically most efficient golf swing. Does this swing exist? If so, what does it look like? How does it work? How do we learn it? Will it work for everyone, regardless of size, shape, gender and age?

The answer is yes! Generally speaking, our joints and muscles all work in the same way, regardless of height, weight, age or gender. If I contract (shorten) my bicep with my arm straight, my arm will bend. If I then contract my tricep, and relax my bicep, the arm will straighten again. We are all designed (have evolved) to move in the same way. There is an optimum, efficient way for us to make any movement. Therefore, there is a ‘perfect’ golf swing. There is an optimum, biomechanically most efficient way to make the movement of the golf swing regardless of any small differences we may have in our size or shape, just as there is an optimum anatomically and biomechanically most efficient way to row a boat, ride a bicycle or throw a javelin. The closest we have to this optimum is Rotary Swing Tour.

So how do we define this perfect golf swing? How do we describe, perform or *learn it*? This is perhaps where the golf instruction industry has failed most spectacularly. It has been so focused on navel gazing and arguing with itself about exactly *which* swing we should be learning, it has



completely neglected the issue of finding out *how* we learn a movement. From birth we are learning and developing new patterns of movement, but only very recently has the golf instruction industry paid any attention to this process. By studying how we learn, experts can now identify the best way to teach a new movement pattern. We'll cover "how" this is properly done in more detail later."

When learning anything, it really helps if we can begin by breaking it down to its basics and fundamentals. When learning to read, we first learn the alphabet. When learning mathematics, we first learn our multiplication tables, and when learning a musical instrument, we learn our scales. To learn to dance, we would begin with the basic steps, very slowly. So what are the fundamental movements of the golf swing? This is the key question, and one that the industry has failed on which to agree or answer.

The Oxford English Dictionary definition of a fundamental is as follows:

Adjective

- forming a necessary base or core; of central importance.
- affecting or relating to the essential nature of something or the crucial point about an issue.
- so basic as to be hard to alter, resolve , or overcome.

So, a fundamental is an origin, the source, a basis, an essential structure or function. If we are looking for fundamental movements in the golf swing, which is a movement of the human body, we have to look at the skeletal and muscular construction of that body. How does that structure move the club, to create a golf swing? Which muscles create that movement? In what order or pattern do they have to fire? What we need is an anatomically, biomechanically correct blueprint for the fundamental movement of the golf swing.

The impulse to make any movement comes from the brain. It is transmitted through the nervous system to the muscles, which in turn move the bones through a range defined by the joints. The brain and the nervous system learn a new movement in a very specific way. Repetition is key. If you exercise a movement over and over again, that pattern becomes ingrained and more efficient. Unfortunately, the brain and nervous system don't know the difference between a 'good' movement and a 'bad' movement. They just know that the movement is repeating, so the body gets better at doing it. This is why you can make almost any golf swing work to some extent, if you practice it often enough.

However, most of us don't have hours and hours to practice, and we don't want to risk making a movement that is going to cause us stress, fatigue or injury, even when it means hitting the ball well. We are much better off making the most efficient, safest movement we can. Primarily, the fundamental golf swing movement is a rotation of the torso around the spine. We all have the same set of muscles that are designed (or have evolved) to carry out this specific function. So we want to learn to make this fundamental

movement correctly and efficiently. The best way to do this is to learn which muscles to use, how they work and then how to control them. This allows us to master all the fundamentals of the swing, each one in turn.

So, we can say that there is an anatomically and biomechanically optimum way to make the basic, fundamental movement of the golf swing; The Perfect Swing. And there is a well-established process for learning new patterns of movement that has been tried and tested in other fields, such as music, dance or other sports. The Rotary Swing Tour golf method encompasses both the perfect swing and the ideal process to learn it. What the Rotary Swing Tour learning program does is put the "what" to do and the "how" to do it together to make learning the movement of the golf swing easier than ever before.



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PART 3. THE FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENTS OF THE GOLF SWING.

Let's go back to our dictionary definition of a fundamental.

Adjective

- forming a necessary base or core; of central importance
- affecting or relating to the essential nature of something or the crucial point about an issue.
- so basic as to be hard to alter, resolve , or overcome.

So we get the general idea. We are looking for *essential movements* of the golf swing which “*are a necessary base or core; of central importance.*” We want *facts* about the movement of swinging the golf club “*so basic as to be hard to alter, resolve or overcome.*” We are looking for truths “*relating to the essential nature or crucial parts*” of the



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movement. Note the absence of the words *opinion*, *theory*, *preference*, *viewpoint*, *judgment* and *hypothesis*.

It might help us to look at synonyms for the word *fundamental*. The dictionary gives us the following:

- primary
- original
- central
- absolute

So we are looking to identify the primary, original, central movements that will perform the golf swing.

While we are in dictionary land, let's just have a quick look at the opposites of a fundamental, to see if they might help us stay on the right path.

Antonyms of *fundamental*:

- secondary

- consequential
- peripheral
- dependant

What we are not looking for in our quest for defining aspects of the movement of the perfect golf swing are things that are secondary, consequential, things that happen as a result of something else, that are dependant, an effect rather than a cause. The picture gradually starts to become a little clearer.

Now let's look at some aspects of the golf swing to define them as fundamental. The most discussed and controversial dimension is the swing plane, often described as *fundamental*. However, if we look at the definitions, we can immediately see that the swing plane cannot be described as a fundamental; it is neither original, nor primary. The plane on which the club moves depends on the way you move your body. Nor is it an absolute; it can be either flat or upright, depending on how much you tilt your spine and how high you lift your arms up in the backswing. If we look at the antonyms, it would fit quite nicely in there as

secondary, dependant and consequential. It is a by-product of the rotational movement of the torso, and the elevation of the arms during the swing. This isn't to say that swing plane is not important; it is. But it cannot be a fundamental according to the definitions above. Indeed anything that refers to the movement or position of the club, the shaft, the club head or face, cannot be described as a fundamental. All of these things are effects, consequences, and dependant on the movement of the body. The club cannot move itself!

So, what can we describe as a fundamental? As stated in Part 2, rotation is the primary movement in the golf swing. The club head is swung around the body in a roughly circular motion. The muscles of the body provide the force to move the club in this way. The body has to rotate around a central point to create this movement. So the basic, primary, original movement of the perfect golf swing could be said to be the rotation of the body around a central point (the spine). Another fundamental movement would be the correct posture; the arrangement or set up of the body making it possible to move our torso and limbs to perform the ideal golf swing.

Once we have defined the fundamentals, those basic movements that are combined to perform the perfect golf swing, we are in a position to decide *how* we are going to perform them. We can begin to build a plan based on a clear goal that will allow us to achieve it. For example, a part of the setup or posture is the stance; therefore a fundamental movement. How do we perform this fundamental correctly? What is the correct stance width? This would be the width from which we can remain as balanced, centred and stable as possible, while generating as much rotational speed as possible, transfer our weight correctly to generate power, and have our joints and muscles aligned in such a way as to place the body under as little stress as possible. This is what Rotary Swing Tour has done and will continue to do.



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PART 4. LEARNING HOW TO LEARN.

“We are what we repeatedly do.

Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit.”

Aristotle

Once we have defined the fundamental movements of the swing, we can look at learning those movements and turning them into habitual patterns. As discussed in Part 1, there are any number of different swing models out there, some of which can be made to work if taught well and practiced properly. Golfers seldom improve, thus, few, if any, of these models actually work. The industry seems obsessed by “what” it teaches, rather than “how” it teaches it. Learning to change a movement is *not* a quick, easy or short-term solution. Some golf instructors resist explaining this to their prospective clients, preferring to focus on the




latest swing model or training aid they are using, and when that one doesn't work, there is always another one coming along.

So, how do we change an already well-grooved pattern to something different, something more effective? As stated in Part 2, the impulse to make any movement comes from the brain. It is transmitted through the nervous system to the muscles; the muscles move the bones through a range defined by the joints. The brain and the nervous system learn new movements in a very specific way. Electrical impulses are fired through the nervous system to instruct the particular muscles to fire. Remember that an individual muscle only has two states; relaxed or contracted. A complex movement such as the golf swing results from a combination of different muscles contracting and relaxing at very specific times. If you make a movement over and over again, the pathway these impulses take through the nervous system becomes reinforced with a substance called myelin. (Sometimes you will hear this called “muscle memory,” which is a misnomer,

as muscles don't have a memory). If you want to know more about the role myelin plays in the acquisition of new skills, I can highly recommend *The Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle.

Coyle says, “Every human skill, whether it's playing baseball or playing Bach, is created by chains of nerve fibres carrying a tiny electrical impulse – basically a signal travelling through a circuit. Myelin's vital role is to wrap those nerve fibres the same way rubber insulation wraps a copper wire, making the signal stronger and faster by preventing the electrical impulses from leaking out. When we fire the signals in the right way—when we practice swinging that bat or playing that note—our myelin responds by wrapping layers of insulation around that neural circuit, each new layer adding a bit more skill and speed. The thicker the myelin gets, the better it insulates and the faster and more accurate our thoughts and movements become.” This process is sometimes called *neuromuscular re-education*.



So, every time we make a movement, that movement pattern becomes more ingrained and more efficient. Unfortunately, the brain and nervous system don't know the difference between a *good* movement and a *bad* movement. They simply improve with repetition. This is why you can make any golf swing work to a certain extent, if you practice it enough. Where the system really excels and improves is when the human organism's capabilities for learning and reproducing a movement, is coupled with a really good model for the best movement. By identifying fundamental movements of the golf swing, we now have this blueprint, and a step-by-step process to teach and learn it.

The step-by-step approach is crucial to success in learning a new movement pattern. Coyle calls the process of breaking a movement pattern down into its individual component parts "chunking." Each chunk is practiced over and over again until it is fully ingrained. The next chunk is then "stacked" on top. If combining the two movements isn't successful, the second movement is removed, and they

are practiced again in isolation until they can be completed successfully. It is estimated that fully "learning" each new element of the movement takes between three and five thousand repetitions. So, to complete the process of neuromuscular re-education for a complex movement pattern such as the golf swing will take a long time.

Let's take an average of 4000 perfect repetitions for each component movement of the pattern as a whole. Bear in mind that you will make many, many imperfect repetitions. So let's say, 8000 repetitions each of the correct grip, posture, weight shift, weight shift with rotation in the takeaway, weight shift and rotation in the takeaway, arm movements to complete the backswing, weight shift in the transition, rotation in the downswing, arm movements in the downswing, and the correct follow through. Also bear in mind that you will need to make a number of "blending" repetitions, where you blend one movement into the next. So let's take the rough figure of 100,000 repetitions of the individual and then blended components of the golf swing

movement for them to become fully ingrained. This sounds like a huge amount of time and effort, and in the modern culture of quick fix, short termism and instant results, it certainly is. But, bear in mind at the end of the process you will be well on the way to having a tour quality golf swing, and you will have a better understanding of how it works than most golf professionals.

In his book *Outliers: The Story of Success*, the author, **Malcolm Gladwell**, examines the factors that contribute to high levels of success. He examines the causes of why the majority of Canadian ice hockey players are born in the first few months of the calendar year, how Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates achieved his extreme wealth, and how two people with exceptional intelligence, Christopher Langan and J. Robert Oppenheimer, end up with such vastly different fortunes. Throughout the publication, Gladwell repeatedly mentions the “10,000-Hour Rule” (a theory based on a study by psychology professor Dr K. Anders Ericsson), which states that the key to mastery in any field is, to a large



extent, a matter of practicing a specific task for a total of around 10,000 hours. If we estimate that we might be able to make 50 proper reps of a movement, with full concentration, in 10 minutes, or 300 per hour, 100,000 repetitions of the movements of the golf swing would take us just over 330 hours to complete. Not that long in the great scheme of things to build a tour quality golf swing. You can then spend the remaining 9670 hours actually hitting a golf ball. I recommend you spend the majority of that time working on your short game and putting.

Repetition is the key to success. Or as stated by the Greek philosopher, Aristotle, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act, but a habit.” The blueprint for acquiring a biomechanically sound and efficient golf swing is to define the movement as a whole, break it down into its component parts, practice the individual movements until they are habitual, and then stack them back up to create the new overall movement pattern. The way to do this is by focused repetition. Again, we are working

with the body rather than against it, allowing its natural propensity for learning to work its magic. The alternative, jumping from one tip to the next one, from one quick fix to another, from one golf instructor to another, from one swing model to another, is a recipe for confusion, frustration and a double digit handicap for the rest of your golfing life.



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PART 5. PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE.

“An instructor should exemplify the things he seeks to teach. It will be of great advantage if you yourself can do all you ask of your students and more.”

Bruce Lee


So there we have it; some truths about golf instruction.

There are some uncomfortable truths, as far as the golf instruction industry is concerned. I hope that it has given you some insights as to why you may have been finding it hard to make improvements to your golf swing, and given you some useful facts that you can use to make better decisions about the way to proceed in your quest to improve yourself as a golfer.

The golf swing movement does have fundamentals.


There is an optimum way to swing the golf club, regardless of your age, sex, size, shape or body type, as well as an efficient way to learn a new movement pattern, which utilizes and optimizes the human body's inherent capability for learning new skills and creating habits. If we combine this knowledge, we have a coherent strategy for getting us from where we are now, to where we want to be.

So what is the best way to proceed? Perhaps the best step you can take is to find yourself a good coach or instructor who can help you interpret and apply the information you have to your own game. But how do you choose your instructor? One of the first criteria would be to have a look at their swing and watch them hitting some shots, either on video, or in person. Can they walk the walk as well as talk the talk? Ideally they should be playing regularly and getting reasonable results, even if it is just in local or regional tournaments and pro ams.



I'm always very wary of the guy who says he is too busy teaching to play. Being a golf instructor is a vocation, not a job. If you have fallen out of love with the game to the extent that you no longer want to play, what are your motivations for helping other people to enjoy the game? Have a chat with a potential instructor before you make a decision. Explain exactly what you are looking to achieve and ask them to explain how they will help you achieve it. Find out whose golf swing they like and admire. Who or what do they use as a swing model? Do they have any knowledge about sports science or biomechanics? Ask for references and follow them up. You are going to be spending a lot of time and money with them. Do your research. If you do not want to work with an instructor, or can't find a good one locally, it is essential you invest in a full-length mirror, preferably two, and if possible, a video camera. You can then be your own eyes, and use a learning resource such as RotarySwing.com to provide a program of improvement that you can follow at your own pace.

With the learning model proposed for RST, most of the work is done without a ball. Indeed, much of it without a golf club. There are no distractions. It is vital that you focus on the particular movement, and the particular muscle group you are using to produce that movement. Think of it as gym work for the golf swing. All high-level sports men and women go to the gym to prepare their bodies for the activity they will be performing. A tennis player, for example, will spend a considerable amount of time on strength and conditioning work, but they will also work on balance, posture and technique without a racquet or tennis ball anywhere in sight. The player is preparing the body for the movement they are going to make. This is what we should be doing with our mirror work for the golf swing. It is hard to have the discipline to work in this way. You might say “Hey, if I’m going to work on my golf game, I need to be hitting balls with a golf club.” Actually, you don’t. If you are hitting balls, you are probably just embedding your current movement pattern more deeply. Working with a



mirror with your full attention on the look and feel of the correct movement will lead to faster progress.

There is another real benefit to learning the golf swing in this way, rather than “learning on the job” by beating balls on the range. It has long been recognized that the best mindset for playing and scoring your best, is one that is relatively uncluttered, is free from technical thoughts, that allows our natural ability to be revealed, rather than getting in our own way. If you spend a lot of time hitting golf balls while at the same time thinking about how you are swinging the club, this has a tendency to become your “default” mindset. You get onto the golf course in a pressure situation and immediately revert to “swing thoughts,” rather than clearing your mind, focusing on the target and letting the shot go.

There should be a distinct and absolutely crucial separation between our training or learning mentality and our playing or trusting mentality. So many people do not recognize or maintain this separation and, therefore, neither

learn as well as they could, nor reach their potential on the golf course. If you do your learning without a ball, your focus is on the movement. Your eyes and the feel of your body will tell you whether you did it right, rather than looking at where the ball went. When you go out to play, you will play much better by just focusing on the target and letting your natural athletic ability send the ball to it, rather than worrying whether your swing was right. They are two distinctly different processes. One is learning, the other is performance. If you mix them up, you will not learn as well, and you will definitely not perform as well as you are capable of doing when you play.

If you are an ‘average’ golfer, shooting in the mid 80s, during a round of golf you will make perhaps 40 full golf swings, the rest of your shots will be short shots and putts. We know that our bodies will learn a movement we make regularly, so if those 40 swings are the only ones we make all week, that is what our natural movement pattern will become over time. However, if we are practicing properly, we will

be making between 500 and 1000 “correct” repetitions of part or all of our golf swing in a week. All of a sudden those 40 swings we make on a Saturday morning become almost irrelevant. All the time we are working in front of the mirror, making perfect movements, our bodies are laying down myelin and reinforcing our new movement pattern, and our golf swing will be improving, whether we like it or not. So, when you practice, focus on the movement, not the ball. When you go out to play, focus on the target and your score, not your golf swing. This is the recipe for long-term improvement, and for taking your best game to the course every time you play.

So, hopefully you now have a plan; a roadmap to take your golf swing from where it is now to where you want it to be. I found it really helps to view your golf swing as a permanent “work in progress.” It will never be finished, and will always be changing subtly, for the simple reason that we change. Our bodies get older, they change as our lifestyles change, alter weight or fitness levels. A more

realistic approach is to learn “*your*” golf swing as well as you possibly can. Remember that golf isn’t really about a “perfect” swing, but developing a movement that repeats and allows you to shoot the best scores you can. Scoring will always be more about short game and putting than the golf swing. However, the score is only part of why most of us play. Hitting a pure golf shot is a magical feeling, more so if we can do it at a crucial time. These shots happen more often if your golf swing is technically sound. Owning a powerful, efficient, safe golf swing will give you a huge amount of pleasure and enjoyment over the years, and enjoyment, at the end of the day, is why we play this fantastic game and devote so much time and effort and money to it.



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