

FOUNDED November, 1908, and published bi-weekly. Devoted to the interests of golf and golfers, and the legitimate promotion of the game. Independent in its policies and not affiliated with any golf organization.

The American  
**GOLFER**  
THE SPORT PICTORIAL  
WITH WHICH IS COMBINED  
Sports Graphic

THE aim of this publication is to aid in the development of golf and at the same time to help cultivate in devotees of the game a spirit of good sportsmanship and fair play for which golfers have long been noted.

NOVEMBER 15, 1924

VOLUME XXVII—NO. 23

# The Five Most Important Tips

*The Main Foundation Upon Which the Golf Swing Is Built*

By James M. Barnes

THERE are so many suggestions or tips to give in golf that one might start in the morning and still be at it after dark. There are any number of tips that one might give about the grip to help correct a slice or pull; about the stance; about playing a downhill lie or an uphill lie or a side hill lie. But it is my object in this article for THE AMERICAN GOLFER to attempt to give a foundation for the right swing by naming the most important things to work with.

It is my object to name the few things that are most necessary, that are more important than anything else. For there are certain things in golf that must be done before anything else counts. Without these things being taken care of, nothing else matters.

The roof of a house or the walls of a house are not important if the foundation is weak and won't hold. The same is true of a golf swing.

What are the five most important things for a golfer to work out?

In my opinion they are as follows—

1. KEEPING THE HEAD AS ANCHOR TO THE SWING.
2. THINKING OF THE RIGHT THING AT THE RIGHT TIME—AND THINKING THROUGH.
3. CORRECT PIVOTING WITH THE LEFT SHOULDER AND LEFT KNEE.
4. FIRM AND FAIRLY STRAIGHT LEFT ARM AND FIRM WRIST.
5. HIT THROUGH THE BALL.

### *The First Consideration*

FIRST of all the head must keep its original position. It must not be swayed to the right or left and it must not be lifted. It is the anchor to the swing. It must remain in exactly the same spot from the start of the swing until the ball is hit. Keep the head still and you have a good start towards better golf, much better golf.

The second most important thing is the correct art of concentration, which means to think of the right thing at the right time and think on through.

In addressing the ball the thing to think of is the smoothness of the back-



Levick

This photograph of Jim Barnes, specially posed, shows the top of the backswing for a mashie shot. Note the absence of any suspicion of a sway of the body to either side, and also how well the head is maintained as an anchor

swing. Most golfers think of the downswing before the backswing is under way. They are thinking of a pond or a ditch or a bunker to be carried. They are wondering whether they have the right club. They are wondering how hard to hit the ball. They are thinking of the grip or stance or something else.

Decide all that in advance. Judge the distance as well as you can and then select the right club and decide in advance how hard you must hit. But once you have taken your stance let all that go and concentrate on your backswing. Just be sure that you don't hurry it back or lift the club with your right hand. Be sure that your left hand and left wrist and arm take the club back steadily and evenly. If you do that the downswing will usually take care of itself.

But be sure that the backswing is completed before the downswing starts. Don't try to start the downswing too quickly or too hurriedly. It will get there in time.

### *The Next Tip*

THEN we come to tip Number 3—Correct Pivoting. The art of good pivoting is to turn in the left shoulder and the left knee together. As they start in, the hands and club of course must start at the same time. If they turn in together the left side of the body must turn with them.

The turn of the left shoulder and the left knee start the backswing. They must turn in naturally and comfortably, but the body must turn in the same space it held before—which means without any swaying. As the left shoulder and the left knee are turned in, the right leg and the right foot help to balance with part of the weight on the ball of the left foot.

It is a mistake to start the hands and clubhead before the left shoulder and left knee get in motion. The left shoulder is the main hinge of the swing and it must be allowed to come around in a natural way. The left shoulder and the left knee must turn together. The left



These two specially posed photographs of the top of the swing for a full stroke are offered to bring out the contrast between correct methods as shown on the left and faulty methods at the right. Note how the body is swayed in the latter, also the lack of proper pivoting, as well as too much bend in the left arm

Levick

heel will then take care of itself and so will the left hip.

Number Four is the firm and fairly straight left arm. By fairly straight I mean one that is normally straight but not stiff and rigid. It is just about as one might point to an object. There may be just a slight bend in the left elbow, but it must not be pronounced. It is hardly noticeable.

With this firm left arm must come a firm left wrist. No good golf can be played with a flabby left wrist. The left wrist of course gives or cocks slightly at the top of the swing to prevent stiffness. If the body pivots in the right way there is no trouble about the working of the left arm and the left wrist.

Number Five should be to hit the ball. To hit through the ball, which is the most important thing of all. The average golfer seems to think of everything else but hitting on through the ball without stopping the swing. All these things we

have mentioned must lead up to hitting the ball. Don't overlook that important detail, which so many do.

Hitting through the ball means making both the hands and the clubhead follow on through in their own paths. It may be well to emphasize that the hands must travel on through, because it is not an uncommon thing to find players who sweep the clubhead through with a wrist motion, while the hands almost stop their forward sweep, at least they certainly are allowed to slow down very perceptibly.

I might also mention that this feat of hitting through the ball, that is making the clubhead keep up its speed until it is several inches past where the ball lay, is all that is necessary in the way of follow through though of course the momentum of the swing will naturally pull the hands up and around toward the left shoulder. But they should be kept low to keep the clubhead low behind the ball for several inches, before they are

allowed to swing around toward the left. What happens later can have no effect on the flight of the ball.

How can one work out these tips? One of the best ways is to practice swinging a club along right lines. Get some good instructor to see that you are started in the right way. Then begin by swinging without a ball until you have these tips working. Then try them hitting the ball in practice. But see that they all work together. After they are working it is time enough to give more practice to grip and stance and some of the other things. But these are the five most important things to work out first until they become automatic and take care of themselves.

At the finish it should be added that on the backswing while the grip of the left hand is firm, firm but not too tight, the grip with the right hand is quite light. Don't make the mistake of gripping the club too tightly, of trying to squeeze the leather off the shaft.