

Proper Pivot Movement

Is a Spring-like Winding of the Body so that the Maximum Amount of Energy may be Directed at the Ball

By JACK GORDON

"I can't seem to overcome that slice" and "I ought to get more distance," are two of the most frequent remarks heard in and around the clubhouse. The constant repetition of these complaints could be reduced by at least fifty per cent. if a few of the elementary principles which govern the correct swing would be more carefully observed. Here are a few fundamental points which will insure cleaner hitting and longer distance from the tee, prevent slicing and materially reduce scoring.

First of all, the club should be gripped in the fingers with the backs of the hands facing outward—not up or down, as some players have them. This brings the club face squarely against the ball on the down swing. Next, the line of direction is marked and the club face laid on a direct right angle to that line, with care not to change it. Stance is taken accordingly.

The player's feet should be square (or nearly square—some may vary it by an inch or two, but the difference should not be marked) with toes parallel to the direction line. This is important, as the stance plays a vital part in the pivot, the principal point to be discussed. The player should stand so that he can pivot properly.

Pivoting is the winding up of the body, like a spring. It must be taut—not loose or floppy—and drawn to the highest possible tension. Thus when the power is released a maximum amount of energy can be directed at the ball. The proper pivot is a ninety-degree twist of the shoulders from left to right on the up swing and from that position an 180-degree twist from right to left, covering the through swing. This is the minimum range. Many players do not pivot to this extent on the up swing because they feel they cannot get back to the ball in time. But watch our leading professionals—you will see that they usually exaggerate this ninety-degree twist, and do so with rhythm and ease.

The "winding-up" must be thorough. The turn must be so far around that the left heel comes off the ground of its own accord. One need not fear over-swinging—provided that the left arm is straight and that the left hand does not release its hold at the top of the back swing, a very common fault. The left shoulder should, if anything, be past the ball, or surely with it. The right hip should be projected to the right and braced against the stiff right leg.

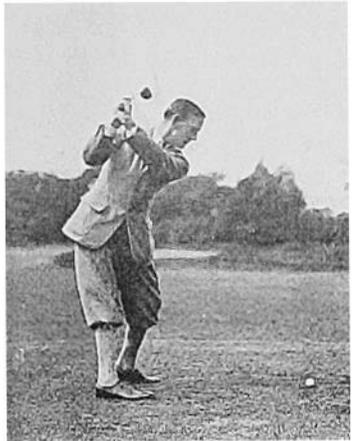
On the down swing, or "unwinding," the weight is gradually shifted from right to left with the almost immediate return to the ground of the left heel. The unwinding continues, greatly aided by the shifting of the weight to the braced stiff left leg, and by the hard pulling of the left arm on the club handle. Then the wrist action levers away the ball by the right wrist climbing over the left with what might be termed a scissors action, and the pivot continues until the right shoulder is around in line with the ball just as the left was on the up swing.

Before I go any further I wish to make clear that this pivot action applies to the shoulders, and not to the hips—many people confuse the two. Leave the hips alone—don't think of them. The turn of the hips is only in sympathy with the shoulders, and is not a separate movement. **If the player tries to turn the right hip around or back in the up swing he is very apt to throw the weight of the body forward to the left leg. This is one of the main causes of slicing, for when he has most of the weight on his left leg and starts down with his swing to hit, he invariably pulls the weight back again on to the right foot. By pulling back, the player cannot possibly follow out after the ball, but pulls the arms in and the club face across the ball at impact. If you are slicing badly and don't know why, check yourself up on this point. You will doubtless find that you are concentrating your pivot in your hips, not in your shoulders. The correct hip movement is from right to left, and vice versa, on a parallel line with the direction, not at right angles. But, again I repeat, don't think of that—think of the pivot as entirely in the shoulders, then you will observe that the correct hip movement follows naturally.**

The proper pivot is the most essential part of the swing, because it is the body, and not the arms, which furnish the greatest amount of power when the down swing is begun. Unwinding of the body gives speed to the arms, then to the wrists. It is very important to hit against that stiff left leg, which offers sufficient resistance to stop the left side and allow the entire right side to force well through the ball. If the swing is made properly the club will be carried over the left shoulder before the muscles relax from the great tension they have undergone. **Improper pivoting** (Continued on page 50)



Correct—Top of Swing. Complete pivot, shoulders at right angle to direction line, club shaft pointing to flag.



Correct—Top of Swing, Shows same position as above. Right elbow is kept down and left arm nearly straight.



Correct — Mid - way Down Swing. Club started before shoulders, right elbow well into side, left arm pulling down.



Correct—Immediately After Hitting. Head still in address position, club following well out after ball.



Incorrect—Top of Swing. Hips have turned around too far, throwing weight of body onto left leg—slice position.



Incorrect—Top of Swing. Shoulders have not turned enough. Shaft pointing to left of direction line—slice position.



Incorrect—Mid-way Down Swing. Shoulders ahead of club, right elbow away from side, club out beyond ball.



Incorrect — Immediately After Hitting. Hands drawn in across ball, shoulders having turned before head of club.

The Proper Pivot

(Continued from page 19)

is almost solely the cause of slicing and perhaps many other troubles. Consistently and uniformly long balls are impossible without it.

Finally, the same radius must be maintained throughout the swing. The left arm should be brought around and out, so far as is comfortable, the right keeping the club on a plane by staying down under the shaft—that is important—do not allow it to stray around to the back or up because this flattens the swing and the club comes over the arm instead of the shoulder. After the ball is hit the right arm straightens out until the ball is started on its way, then both arms bend and finish with the club over the left shoulder.

People are continually asking about the straight left arm on the up swing. Please note that this straight left arm does not imply rigidity, but is kept as straight as is comfortable to the player—there is always a slight give at the elbow.

I would like to show here how the grip and stance influence the swing. If the grip is not good a player has little chance of swinging properly, for he is almost certain to take the shortest way to the top in his swing, generally lifting with the hands instead of sweeping round with the arms.

If, in the stance, the right foot is drawn back or advanced too far, it will be nearly impossible for him to keep his club head travelling in the proper sphere. When he is pivoting, the shoulders should turn freely, not dipping up and down.

Above all, take plenty of time, delay the blow. Otherwise it requires too much effort to stop the club at the top of the swing and start it down again. The down swing should start easily so that the club head may be accelerated with the greatest force as it comes into the ball. That will keep the body out of the way naturally, and will prevent that jerky movement which causes slicing, topping, dubbing and many other habits.

There is real pleasure and joy in connecting cleanly with a ball, and a wonderful satisfaction in controlling its flight through the fairway and on the putting green. These suggestions will help to develop a swing that can be relied upon, the outstanding feature of which will be ease, rather than effort. It will produce a consistent and reasonable degree of accuracy.
