Instant Golf Swing Success:
How To Solve Your Golf Swing Problems

Instantly Improve Your Golf Swing Without Starting From Scratch

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This ebook is contains content and illustrations from the classic 1963 book “How To Solve Your Golf Problems” by The Professional Panel (Jack Burke Jr, Byron Nelson, Johnny Revolta, Paul Runyan, Horton Smith). Illustrations by James McQueen, Desigend by James Darby
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How to Solve Your Golf Swing Problems Instantly

Introduction

In this report you can find the cure for almost any specific ailment in your full golf swing without having to review the entire golf swing or even learning a new golf method from scratch. However, this game changing report is primarily for the player who has been through the overall learning process of acquiring a sound grip, address position and swing plane who is looking for a refresher course for a specific fault. Surely any golfer, regardless of the soundness of his swing or the limit of his experience, knows that golf is not an exact science, and that players will from time to time encounter faults that will need specific treatment. This is the primary purpose of "Solving Your Golf Problems."

Analysing and identifying your golf problems

The first thing before we are going to show you how to solve golf swing problems is how you can identify the problem that hinders you from hitting long and straight shots. Awareness is always the first step.

There are different ways how you can identify your problem

The first thing is to observe your ball flight (straight, curved to the right, curved to the left, too high, to low, too short) from the tee and fairway. Try to find out whether there is a difference between shots with the driver, fairway woods, long irons or short irons.

A good way to identify your weaknesses is to take notes on the course. Just add five additional columns to your scorecard and note down the numbers of fairways you hit with your driver, how many tee shots you hit left or right, number of green in regulation and how many greens you hit from below 100 yards with your short irons. This will give you the perfect analysis to successfully improve your golf skills.

You can also find software & tools on the web. A very affordable (less than 10 bucks) software I use: Golf Intel Performance Software Handicaptracker
After you have identified a pattern of your full swing problems you can identify the problem with the following table:

**The major Golf Problems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Slice</strong></td>
<td>A slice is a specific left-to-right trajectory shape for a golf ball created by a significant tilt of the spin-axis of the golf ball to the right, or a clockwise spin. This is opposite for lefties. A slice usually ends up right of the target line, and the term is often used when the curve in the trajectory is extreme and unintentional. The less extreme version of a slice is called a &quot;fade&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hook</strong></td>
<td>A hook is a specific right-to-left trajectory shape for a golf ball created by a significant tilt of the spin-axis of the golf ball to the left, or a counter-clockwise spin. This is opposite for lefties. A hook usually ends up to the left of the target line, and the term is often used when the curve in the trajectory is extreme and unintentional. The less extreme version of a hook is called a &quot;draw&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Push</strong></td>
<td>A push is a ball that goes directly to the right because of the action of the club. This should not be mistaken for a slice. A slice is an action of the ball spinning clockwise. A slice normally begins to the target and arcs away to the right, (left for lefties). A push is an action of the swing and is normally in an in-to-out swing motion. The opposite of the push is the pull, which is an out-to-in swing motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pull</strong></td>
<td>The opposite of the push is the pull. A pull is a ball that goes directly to the left because of the action of the club. A pull is an action of the swing and is normally in an out-to-in swing motion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shank</strong></td>
<td>The ball shoots off the club at almost a right angle to the target (to the left for lefthand players).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topping</strong></td>
<td>Ball is usually contacted above center, ball is rolling on the ground.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scalping</strong></td>
<td>Hit the ground first or hitting fat shots</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to work on improving your golf game

We strongly recommend that you take a video of your swing. This is the fastest and most effective way to eliminate your golf swing problems.

This can be easily done with a digital camera. I use a Canon Ixus 55 which makes a perfect job. Film your swing from down the line and in front of you.

Now you can either watch your golf swing on TV by connecting your digital camera to your TV or watch it on your PC. There’s a great free golf analysis software with variable-rate slow motion and drawing tools. You can download it from here: http://www.v1golfacademy.com/v1home.asp

Tip: You can use the software to compare your golf swing with a golf video of your favourite pro. I used a down-the-line video from Adam Scott which is available for free with the software mentioned above. The best is to choose a pro golfer with the same physics you have. I identified step-by-step what the differences are: Set-up, Grip, Stance, Backswing, Downswing, Follow-trough. I started working on each component, focussing on one area until I’ve mastered it before moving to the next.

Once you have the video or pictures of your golf swing ready you can start working on improving your specific swing faults. In the following sections you will find the golf problems and their very effective cures. This is the fastest way to eliminate your golf swing problems.

Use your digital camera or camcorder to track the progress. Once you start changing elements of your swing, record them. The pictures often show something different as you are thinking. Focus on one element (e.g. grip correction) before you start working on another element (e.g. the stance).
The Fundamentals

In order to make the material in this report most effective, easily understood and useful to golfers of all levels, an early chapter should be devoted to an explanation of the basic fundamentals of golf. There are only three basic fundamentals of great importance:

The Grip, the Stance and the Swing Plane

We’ll keep it short and to the point, without fluff. If you control these three fundamentals you’re on the surefire way to hit them long and straight.

The Grip

Although it seems that gripping a golf club may be the most elemental part of the golf swing, and maybe it is, it could also be the most important part of the swing. Gripping the club too tight or too loose, gripping it the wrong way or in the wrong place, could throw off your entire swing. Having an improper grip can greatly detract from the power and accuracy of the swing, and for the advanced golfer, it can hamper the way they try to shape a shot.

The proper placement of the hands on the club, besides securing the club against slippage, allows for the greatest degree of mobility in the wrists and, at the same time, provides the best combination of speed of club head, and control of face alignment, both so important in acquiring power and directional control.

The grip should begin about one finger width from the end of the club, or more, for shorter controlled shots. When the hands are together, the club should lie along the callous pad line of the hands and not in the palms. When the hands are closed around the club, the thumbs should be aligned straight down the club grip. Your forearms should form a “V” down toward the club.

For right-handed players, the left hand is first placed with the beelike end of the club's grip snuggling under the fat heel of the hand. The club's grip then runs
diagonally across the palm, touching the last joint of the middle finger and thence across the middle joint of the first finger.

To get authority from the fingers and still salvage the power of the hand, the shaft lies across both the fingers and the palm, diagonal to the knuckles.

The left hand is then turned over the top of the shaft until the inverted "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger points diagonally across the body toward the right shoulder (2). Strong players, those with exceptional hand action, may point the "V" between the right shoulder and the right cheek.

The thumb of the left hand acts as a set screw, pressing against the shaft at an angle of about 30° behind the top of the shaft. With the left hand in the proper position, we now place the right hand against the back side of the shaft in a vertical position (3). Twine the right-hand fingers around the shaft so that the shaft crosses each finger at the middle joint (refer to Picture #3). The little finger of the right hand should overlap
the first finger of the left hand, but not hook completely. This is called the Vardon, or overlapping, grip.

For weak-handed women, and the occasional narrow-handed man, a grip in which all eight fingers are on the shaft (4) may be advisable.

In either grip, the inverted "V's" of both hands should be closed to prevent the club from slipping toward the palm of the hands during the swing. In other words, the thumbs should act as set screws against which the fingers can securely pull the shaft of the club.

If you have gripped the golf club correctly, only the first two knuckles of your left hand will be visible. Also, your left thumb should be completely hidden under your right hand. The index finger position of your right hand will look and feel like a gun trigger finger.
Although there is no hard fast rule as to how firmly the golfer should grip the club, the prevailing belief is that it should be loose, yet firm enough to keep it from moving in your hands. The swing will naturally cause the hands to strengthen the grip, so try to keep “loose grip” in your mind throughout the swing. Because there is no rulebook on the grip, it is just one of those aspects of the game that the golfer will have to experiment with, and adjust, through repetitive practice and play.

Through practice, the grip is something that should become second nature to the golfer. It is not something that should require as much thought as other aspects of the golf swing, but its importance should never be forgotten. It is recommended that you always keep a club nearby, and just practice applying and reapplying the grip over and over.

If your golf grip pressure is right, the club could almost be pulled out of your hands, but not quite. A correct golf grip will make you feel as if you are holding the club mostly in the palm and last three fingers of your left hand. Regardless, both hands should hold the club with equal pressure. A correct golf grip doesn’t guarantee a successful golf swing; however, a defective golf grip will almost always result in a failed golf swing.
The Stance

If you start with a bad golf stance, you'll probably follow with a bad golf back swing, a bad downswing, and a bad follow through. Not to worry though. It’s just not that difficult! Your golf stance may not be perfect, but you can compensate by staying balanced and relaxed. Your weight should be equally distributed over your left and right leg. If you can pick either of your feet off the ground, you’re not balanced.

Start by placing the inside of your front foot just ahead of the ball. Since you’re going to be using a driver or 3 wood, the front and back feet should be shoulder width or slightly more than shoulder width apart.

Here’s how the ball position varies for different clubs:
Next, bend at the top of the legs (keep your back straight) and then bend slightly at the knees. The kneecaps will be directly above the balls of your feet. The angle of your back to the ground will be approximately 45 degrees. Your arms should be hanging straight down from your shoulders.

Good posture counts. Keep your back straight but don’t tense up. You might think of it as pushing your back pockets higher.

Your weight should be on the balls of your feet, not on the toes or heels. Likewise, your weight should be equally distributed between your front and back foot. Now you should be more comfortable and less tense. If you’re out of balance, you’re falling down. That’s no way to start a good golf swing.

A line drawn across the front of your feet should point to your target. You may want to check this by first placing your club up against the toes of your feet and then step back and see if the club is really pointing to your target. This is your target line and your knees, hips, and shoulders should also be parallel to this line.

One slight adjustment will be the position of your shoulders. When you assume the proper golf stance and grip, your club and left arm will form a straight line between your shoulder and the ball. For this to happen, your right shoulder will be slightly lower to the ground than the left, but a line through your shoulders should still be parallel to the target line.

Once you grip the club and take your stance at the ball, find a way to relax and loosen up before you start your swing. You may want to waggle – or shake your tush - just a little bit and to heck with those who might laugh at you. Once you hit that monster shot, they’ll stop. Now you’re ready to swing.

Remember: The stance is one part of the successful golf game, but it’s very important. Coupled with the grip and other aspects of the swing, it makes up the ability to play a consistent game of golf.
THE SWING PLANE

The third basic fundamental, the swing's plane, is a much misunderstood, highly controversial aspect of the game. This aspect of the golf stroke is influenced most strongly by the degree that the player bends his trunk or torso. The more upright the player stands the more vertical the plane of the swing will generally be. However, the height of the player also has a strong influence on the swing's plane with the shorter player having a flatter plane and the taller one the more upright plane.

The girth of the player is another factor influencing the swing's plane. Of necessity the stout person uses a flatter swing than his thinner fellow player. The short stout golfer will need a flatter plane than the tall stout, and the tall stout will generally have a flatter plane than the tall thin.

The short stout golfer needs a flat swing, first to allow the arms to clear the body during the swing, and second, to produce an arc of sufficient circumference to produce adequate power. This type of golfer needs clubs with a flat lie and shafts of medium to medium-long length to aid in executing this wider arc.

The short thin player could clear his body with his arms while swinging in a somewhat more upright plane, but in doing so he might dig under the ball. To eliminate this digging, such a player would have to use clubs so short as to cut down the swing's circumference and greatly deplete power. Thus the short thin player should also use fairly long equipment with flat club head lies, and he should also swing on a flat plane to produce more power.

The taller stout player should swing on a plane as upright as possible to allow body clearance and adequate power production.

From what has been said about the swing plane one may deduce that I feel a flat swing produces more power than an upright one. This is not true if the upright swing has as wide an arc as the flat one. It is simply a fact that the flatter the plane the
wider arc one can use without digging the club head into the ground behind the ball. And the flatter plane allows the arms to have greater body clearance, a major necessity for the stouter and shorter player.

Of course the length and lie of the various clubs within a given set, say from the driver to the SW-iron, have a bearing upon the angle of swing plane. The longer driver requires a relatively flat plane (Picture #10).

Each succeeding club throughout the matched set to the SW-iron requires a more upright swing plane because the shafts become shorter and the player stands closer to the ball (Picture #11).

In all cases care must be taken not to become so upright in swing plane as to cause arm friction with the body, club head collision with the ground, or power depletion through shortening of the swing's arc.

In summing up, a player will obtain maximum directional control and maximum power if his swing plane is as upright as possible but still not so upright as to produce arm-body friction during the swing.
COMMON PROBLEMS WITH THE SWING

As we've said numerous times, golf is not an exact science. Many golfers have worked for years and years trying to perfect their swing and improve their game. However, problems do arise. They come about mostly because golfers tend to forget the basic mechanics of the game and start playing sloppy.

In this section, we'll address some of the most common problems golfers have along with mistakes they make. We'll offer up some suggestions to help you combat these problems instantly and get on the road toward playing better golf.

The Slice and its instant cure

A slice is a specific left-to-right trajectory shape for a golf ball created by a significant tilt of the spin-axis of the golf ball to the right, or a clockwise spin. This is opposite for lefties. A slice usually ends up right of the target line, and the term is often used when the curve in the trajectory is extreme and unintentional. The less extreme version of a slice is called a "fade".

The sliced shot in golf is similar in many ways to the common cold in everyday living. Both are very bothersome. The slice is double trouble because it not only takes shots off-line, it also cuts length. Both the slice and the cold are common ailments, infecting everyone sooner or later. Both strike with little warning and often hang on, but both can be cured by sound professional guidance.

However, as with cold sufferers, many slicers soon quit seeking a cure. They resign themselves to living with their disorder, allowing for their shots' inevitable bend to the right. This is unfortunate because golf scientists have discovered the two causes of all sliced shots:
1. Contacting the ball with a clubface that is "open" or facing to the right of target, rather than directly toward it, and/or . . . A slice is caused by the club face being slightly open at the point of impact, thus causing the ball to spin in a clockwise motion, (opposite for lefties). In most cases the swing path is correct, but the golf ball is not being hit squarely at the point of impact, commonly caused by what is known as a "weak grip".

2. Cutting across the ball from outside to inside, thus producing a clockwise spin (counter-clockwise for left-handers).

3. A third factor that causes a golf slice may be swing speed and shaft stiffness. If you use a stiff shaft driver try a regular flex or mid flex shaft and that may correct your problem.

There are many faults in the golf swing that can produce either or both of these basic causes of the slice. On the following pages we will discuss the major faults and their respective corrections.

I think one or more of these corrections will help you eliminate those banana balls. But even if you are not slicing now, you should find the discussions to be good "preventive medicine."

**Slice Solutions – How to cure your slice instantly**

The simplest fix for a slice is in the grip. By having a "weak grip", a grip that is turned more counter-clockwise, (opposite for lefties), can cause the club face to open at the time of impact.

**Slice Problem 1: "Weak" grip.**

In the typical "weak" or "slicer's" grip both hands — sometimes just the left — are turned too far to the left on the shaft. The player sees only one knuckle of his left hand. The "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger of the right hand often points toward the left shoulder.
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With a weak left hand grip it is only natural that the player will twist his wrists to the right at the start of the backswing. This opens the clubface so much on the backswing that it becomes difficult to return it to a square or facing-target position at impact. Instead, the clubhead meets the ball with its face still opened to the right and a slice results.

You should start by turning your grip slightly to the right, (left for lefties), thus giving you a "stronger grip", not holding the club more tightly. Remember the basics and only hold the club tight enough to keep control. You should not have any tension on your wrist and forearms.
Slice cure 1:
Grip club with hands turned more to the right. Grip the club with your left hand so that you can see two knuckles. Grip with your right so that the thumb-forefinger “V” points between your right cheek and right shoulder.

With this grip you will find it easier to start the backswing without independently rolling your wrists to the right and opening the clubface. Instead your hands and arms will go back in unison with the tilting and turning of your shoulders and body. No longer will you be forced to compensate on the downswing by consciously rolling your wrists to the left in order to return the clubface squarely to the ball.
Slice problem 2: Open stance with hips and shoulders turned to left of target.

Many slicers actually compound their problem by aiming to the left of target to allow for the ball's bend to the right. In aiming to the left they pull their front foot back from the target line. This automatically turns their hips and shoulders to the left of target.

From this address position it is difficult for the player to take the club back inside the target line with a normal hip turn. Instead, the tendency is to take the clubhead back to the outside with the hips swaying laterally to the right, rather than turning in that direction.

With the outside takeaway it is only natural that the clubhead assumes an outside-in path on the downswing, cutting across the ball and producing the clockwise slice spin.
Slice Cure 2:
Employ a square stance in which an imaginary line across the toes would parallel a line from the ball to the target. With both feet parallel to the target line you will find it much easier to take the club head back inside. Because this stance will square your shoulders and hips on line with the target, you also will find it easier to turn your hips on the backswing rather than sway them laterally away from the target.

A good way to check to see that your stance is square is to stand opposite a wall in your living room and make certain that both toes are the same distance from the wall. Then assure yourself of an inside takeaway by noting that the club head moves away from, rather than closer to, the wall at the start of your backswing.
Slice problem 3: Overturning

It is a paradox in golf that overturning the hips on the backswing can cause the same problems that result from a sway — or lack of hip turn. By overturning his hips on the backswing, the player often takes the clubhead too much around his body — too much inside the target line. Then at the top of the backswing, he often loops the clubhead to the outside so that the shaft actually bisects the imaginary target line and points to the right of target.

On the downswing the player then turns his right shoulder almost over the ball instead of bringing it down and under. As a result the clubhead returns to the ball from outside the target line and a slice spin occurs. Also, because of overturning and transferring so much weight to the right on the backswing, the player finds it difficult to correctly return his weight to his left foot on the downswing.
Slice Cure 3: Minimize hip turn and weight shift to the right on the backswing

Too many people feel that a proper turn requires twisting the hips as fully as possible on the backswing. Actually this is not true because such a turn only makes it more difficult to return weight to the left foot on the downswing. I like to feel that only a slight percent of my weight goes to the right on the backswing. You will be surprised how much your hips can unwind into the ball from a minimum of turn going back. Also a minimum hip turn will help you refrain from taking the club too far inside on the backswing and then looping at the top. I like to have my club about parallel with the target line at the top of the backswing, rather than to have it looped to the outside so that it points to the right of target.
Slice problem 4: Swaying

The sway, with its resulting problems, is the No. 1 reason for sliced shots. In swaying, the player moves his hips to the right much as does a hula dancer. The right leg bends to the right and too much weight shifts to the right foot. With so much of his weight to the right on the backswing, the player finds it difficult to return his weight to the left on the downswing. Instead he falls back on his right foot before the club meets the ball. This opens the clubface to the right at impact and often forces the club into the ball from the outside. A sliced shot is almost inevitable.

A sway is encouraged by an improper takeaway, wherein the player opens the clubface by twisting his hands and arms to the right early in the swing.
Slice Cure 4: With right leg firm, turn — rather than sway — hips on backswing

A proper hip turn will be assured if you do not let your right leg or right hip move any farther laterally to the right on the backswing than they were at the address position. You will be aided in achieving this goal if you take the club from the ball with your hands, arms, shoulders and body working in a unified “one-piece” movement. With a proper hip turn you will find it much easier to transfer your weight to your left foot on the downswing. Moving your right knee sharply toward the target at the start of the downswing will further insure against your falling back on your right side.
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Slice problem 5: Hands too far ahead of club head in hitting area

Sequence photos of professional golfers as they move into the hitting area can mislead the average player. The pro, with his tremendous hand action and club head speed, is able to make the club head "catch up" with his hands at impact so that the clubface again looks squarely toward the target. However, the average player cannot allow his hands to lead the club head to such a great extent late in the downswing and still hope to make the club head catch up during impact. Instead, his "early hands" and "late club head" produce a hit with a still-open clubface that is turned to the right of target.
Slice Cure 5: Accelerate club head on downswing.

Ideally, you should strike the ball with your hands and club head in the same relative position as when you addressed the ball. To assure returning the club head to this address position before the hands have moved beyond, I suggest you concentrate on accelerating the club head as soon as your hands pass shoulder height on the downswing.

This acceleration will not only help you square the clubface with the target at impact, but will also help you shift your weight to your left foot.
Slice problem 6: Another major cause of the slice is bad footwork

Good footwork correctly shifts your weight and turns your hips, bringing the club head down unerringly within the path it made going back.

Slice cure 6:
Imagine the ball divided in half by a line in the direction you want the ball to travel. Anytime you hit that half of the ball farther from you, you slice.

To hit the nearer half you must swing the club head down inside the path it described going back. In order to do this, the right knee must be pointed well in front of the ball on the downswing. This gets your weight off your right heel, sending the club head inside and out as it strikes the nearer half of the ball.

In any event, you must shift your weight from right to left as you hit the ball. Slicers simply do not get their weight off their right heel until after they've hit the ball—sometimes not till after the ball is out of bounds.
Draw/Fade

The less extreme version of a Hook is called a "Draw", and the less extreme version of a slice is called a "Fade". Many golfers find that they are only having a draw or fade with their longer clubs, and they are very accurate with their shorter clubs.

Both the draw and the fade are both products of a stronger swing and can be normal. Many golfers use the fade and the draw to their advantage. Slight modifications to your swing will correct both problems, but be careful; tampering with perfection could lead to disaster.

If you are consistent with the fade or the draw, my advice would be to continue to play either shot, just slightly change your aim. If you are inconsistent in your shots and you sometimes fade, draw, slice or hook, look into getting back to the basics and modify your swing to correct your inconsistencies.
The Hook – 5 quick and easy cures

It may be of little compensation to golfers who hook, but they are members of a much more elite group than their counterparts — the slicers.

That doesn’t mean that a hook is anything to brag about. Actually a bad hook can raise scores even faster than a slice because a hooked shot carries less backspin than does a slice and, therefore, is more prone to roll on and on, farther and farther off the fairway.

However, I think it is safe to say that all good golfers — including Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson — have fought a hook at one time or other. I doubt that any living golfer ever hit as many practice shots to correct a hook as did this pair of champions.

Most good golfers are more apt to hook than slice because a hook is often the result of too much hand action. Hand action is desirable in golf, but if overdone a hook may result.

Basically a hooked shot bends to the left (for a right-handed player) because the clubface is turned to the left — or closed — at impact. The hooking tendency becomes even more pronounced if the club head passes across the ball from inside the intended line of flight to the outside, thus imparting additional counter-clockwise, or hook, spin to the ball. When this happens the poor victim starts playing nearly every shot from the left-hand rough — if he keeps his shots in bounds.

On the following pages, six basic causes of hooked shots and supply corrections for each are pointed out.
Hook problem 1: "Strong" grip

A typical "strong" or "hook" grip finds both hands turned too far to the right (to the left for southpaws) on the club at the address position. Such a grip is the most common cause of hooked shots.

Often three or more knuckles of the left hand will be evident to the player. The "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger of his or her right hand will point to the right of the right shoulder.

With this grip the player usually would find that at the top of his backswing the clubface is completely closed, or pointing directly skyward. From this position at the top of the swing it is almost inevitable that even a normal uncoiling of the body, shoulders and arms will return the club head to the ball in a closed position with the clubface turned to the left.
Hook cure 1: Grip the club with your hands turned more to the left, holding the shaft more in your fingers

If your grip is too "strong," you are probably gripping the club too much in the palms of your hands; much like a baseball player grips the bat. Grip the club with the palm and fingers of your left hand so that you can see only two knuckles at the address position. This should point your left-hand "V" toward your chin. Grip largely with the fingers of the right hand so that the "V" points about to the right cheek.

Now at the top of your backswing you should find your clubface pointing more forward, in the direction that you are facing, not directly skyward as before. A normal uncoiling on the downswing now should return the clubface to the ball in a square-to-target position.

Practice the grip and check your results. Changing your grip should be slight, over compensating can cause other problems with your swing or begin to cause you to slice.
Hook problem 2: "Reaching" for the ball

Occasionally, hooking stems from standing too far from the ball at the address position. This "reaching" for the ball may provoke the tendency to take the club too much inside, or around the body, on the backswing. The shoulders tilt little, if any. Instead they turn on too-level a plane, both in going back and in returning to the ball. The player fails to hit down and through the ball. Instead he merely brings the club head around his body on the downswing and follow-through in a too-level, baseball-like swing. This forces the right wrist to roll over the left in the hitting area, closing the clubface and causing a hook.
Hook cure 2: Stand closer to the ball in a more upright posture

Standing closer to the ball with less bending from the waist (there should still be a slight bend at the waist and knees) will help you achieve a more upright swing, with less club head movement to the inside on the backswing.

Now your left shoulder should tilt slightly on the backswing and your right should come down and under on the downswing. Your hands will automatically go higher on the backswing and follow-through. All this will encourage your left hand to pull the club into the hitting area and discourage your right hand from rolling over and closing the clubface.
Hook problem 3: Allowing for a hook by aiming to the right of target

A player who suffers from a hook almost instinctively aims to the right of the target to allow for the shot's bend to the left. He does this by closing his stance — placing his left foot closer than his right to the target line. In effect, this also aims his hips and shoulders to the right of target.

This player has inadvertently assumed the address position used by many players when they wish to hook intentionally. For a player who already hooks, this closed address position merely compounds the problem.

With a closed stance at address, the player usually takes his club back too much inside the target line. He returns the club to the ball from the inside to the outside. Thus he increases his hooking problems by putting a counter-clockwise, or hook, spin on the ball.
Hook Cure 4: Address the ball with feet, hips and shoulders parallel with the target line

Lay a club just outside your ball with the shaft pointing directly at the target — in other words, along the target line. Lay another club parallel to the first and across your toes.

Now, with feet, hips and shoulders facing at right angles to the target, swing through the ball so that the movement of your clubhead in the hitting area parallels the clubs on the ground.

At first you may feel that you are now swinging from outside to inside the target line, or cutting across the ball. However, keep swinging in this manner and soon your mind and muscles will develop the habit of moving the clubhead along the target line. Very few good players allow the clubhead to move outside the target line at any time during their swings.
How to Solve Your Golf Swing Problems Instantly

Hook Cure 5: Loose left hand at the top of the backswing

The player who allows the end of his club shaft to slip up into the fingers of his left hand at the top of his backswing is well on his way to a hook. Failure to maintain a firm grip with the left hand can cause the right hand to dominate early on the downswing. This right hand domination causes the wrists to uncock too early, when the hands are still well behind the ball. The right hand overpowers the left, turning the clubface to the left in a hook position when it meets the ball. It should be noted that the loose left hand can also produce a slice if the player throws the club head to outside the target line on the down swing.
Hook cure 5: "Firm up" your grip with the left hand

Failure to grip firmly with the left hand at the top of the swing can be caused by over swinging — striving for a longer backswing than the player's muscular makeup allows. A shorter backswing will help keep your left hand firmly on the club. Also, exercises for the left hand will help overcome any right-hand domination. Many have helped themselves by squeezing tennis balls in the left hand. This is very worthwhile, especially in curing a hook, but I feel that a rubber dog bone or something else that fits across the palm in the same manner as a club shaft will be even more beneficial.
Hook problem 6: Weak or sloppy wrists
The golfer who is lazy with his wrists, especially as he moves into the hitting area, invites a hooked shot. Sloppy wrists on the downswing make it difficult for the left side, arm and hand to lead the club head into the ball with a delayed unhinging of the wrists.

Instead sloppy wrists encourage the right hand to overpower the left and the hands to lag behind the club head at impact. This often closes the clubface into the hook position in the hitting area.

Often sloppy wrists at impact are caused by sloppy wrists on the backswing wherein the hands "drag" the club head back from the ball during the takeaway.
Hook cure 6: Firm wrists throughout the swing

Develop the habit of taking the club back from the ball with the wrists firm and the hands, arms and body working as a one-piece unit. Then on the downswing pull the club down to the ball with a firm left side, arm and wrist. Let your left side and hand lead the club into the ball. Never consciously try to uncock your wrists into the ball. This usually results in a premature unhinging wherein the right hand takes over and closes the clubface. Your wrists should uncock automatically as a result of your pulling downward into and past the ball with a straight left arm and a firm left wrist.
Loss of Distance and how to instantly hit’em longer

I’m sure that sudden loss of distance has crept into your game at one time or other. I know it's happened to me.
You've been out-driving your weekend golf partners all season. Then one day you suddenly discover that you are short man off the tee. When this occurs it is time to review your swing, preferably under the guidance of a professional.

The golf swing should be a connected and coordinated unit, within which proper timing is paramount. Good timing gives the player all the mechanical advantages which have been built into his equipment. When loss of distance occurs, chances are good that the player's timing is at fault.

However; "timing" is a general term, and proper timing is based on several swing fundamentals. If one or more of these fundamentals are executed improperly, bad timing — and loss of distance — result.

Fundamentals upon which good timing is predicated include: Good posture and balance; proper shifting of weight during the swing so as to achieve maximum control and momentum of the club head; and, of course, true alignment of the hands — especially the right — with the clubface both at address and at impact.

Ways to correct any possible short-circuiting of these Basic Requirements for good timing will be discussed and illustrated on following pages.

However, first I'd like to suggest a practice technique that has helped me regain distance.

Strangely enough, this involves practicing putts from 5 to 50 feet in length. In such practice, power as such is de-emphasized. The premium is on elements of "precision," such as "touch," timing, square-to-target alignment of hands and clubface, and simply hitting the ball squarely.
Then, when the player progresses from putting to short approach shots to full shots, this emphasis on precision will pay off in added distance.

Thus, putting practice provides a foundation for full iron and wood shots. It's like opening a door — once the key (in this case precise putting) is properly inserted into the lock (your swing), the door (longer drives) opens quite easily.

When practicing putting to build a base for longer drives, concentrate on contacting the ball squarely in the center or "sweet area" of the clubface. Strive for a sharp and crisp sounding "click" as the putter meets the ball. Seek club-ball contact that produces a minimum of jar, shock or vibration.

My friend Frank Walsh used to advise that "as you swing you should train yourself to listen for the click." Anticipating the click serves both as a goal and a check for a precise swing. Try it the next time you play.

In putting, though force is a minimum objective, I am happy to "get distance" without consciously striking the ball hard. The more distance I get on putts with the least effort, the better I like it. This tells me that my stroke is well-timed and in the groove so that the clubface strikes the ball squarely. Then I know that I can expect these same virtues on full shots.

Now let us turn to specific causes for loss of distance and suggestions on how these causes can be eliminated.
Lost of distance problem 1: Shifting weight to the left on the backswing.

Often times, in an attempt to keep the head steady, a golfer will shift his weight to the left on the backswing. He will probably fall back to his right foot on the downswing, sacrificing a great deal of power.
Loss of distance cure 1: Shift some weight to the right leg on the backswing

Make certain that you turn and shift your weight in the same direction as you are moving the club. For right-handed players this would mean that some weight would shift to the right foot in rhythm with the club head’s move in that general direction.
Loss of distance problem 2: Swaying or lateral movement of the form.

Swaying causes many golf problems, including sliced, topped and "fat" or scuffed shots. However, it is also a major cause of loss of distance. When, instead of turning his body and shoulders on the backswing, the golfer moves his body laterally to the right, he fails to fully extend or coil the muscles of his left side. When these big muscles of the back and legs are not fully coiled, they fail to generate maximum power to the arms, hands and, finally, the club head when uncoiling on the downswing.

Swaying also puts too much burden on the arms which cannot, in themselves, provide maximum club head speed.
Loss of distance cure 2: Stretch the rubber band.

At one time in our lives most of us have played with model airplanes — the kind that are wound by twirling the propeller which is attached to a rubber band. So it is in the golf swing — except that you are the rubber band.

On the backswing the body should coil or turn, yet still remain in the same area as it occupied at the address position. Generally speaking, the more fully this coiling stretches the left side muscles, the faster the club (like the propeller) will unwind on the downswing.
Loss of distance problem 2: Failure to achieve a straight and taut left arm and a fully cocked right arm at the start of the downswing

The golfer who starts his downswing with his left arm bent breaks the "circuit" of power which should be flowing from his legs and back muscles to the club. It's like shutting off a flow of water by crimping a garden hose.

Also, failure to keep the right arm bent, or "cocked," at the start of the downswing encourages a premature release or uncocking of the wrists.
Loss of distance cure 2: Quick weight shift and a “tight” right elbow.

Return weight to the left foot immediately at the start of the downswing and, at the same time, move the right elbow in close to your side. These combined movements will automatically cause the left arm to straighten and the right to cock early in the downstroke.

Then, as the club head enters the hitting area, the left arm will be ready to conduct power to the club and the right arm can straighten and thrust the hands and club head through the ball.
Loss of distance problem 3: Pulling up in the hitting area.

This fault is a result of improper weight shift on the downswing. The golfer has prematurely straightened his right arm and uncocked his wrists well before the club head reaches the point of impact. Most all of his power has already been spent.
Loss of distance cure 3: Hit down and through the ball

By leading with the left side and holding wrist "break" until the last possible moment, you save your power for the hitting area. This allows you to achieve the maximum club head speed at point of impact and to avoid raising your body in the hitting area.
Push – Stop hitting to the right

A push is a ball that goes directly to the right because of the action of the club. This should not be mistaken for a slice. A slice is an action of the ball spinning clockwise. A slice normally begins to the target and arcs away to the right, (left for lefties). A push is an action of the swing and is normally in an in-to-out swing motion. The opposite of the push is the pull, which is an out-to-in swing motion.

Actually, the push differs from a good golf shot only in one major respect: The push has the club head moving from inside to outside the target line at impact. On a perfect shot the club head also moves from the inside, but it then continues momentarily along — rather than across — the imaginary line from ball to target.

There are several major causes of pushed shots. They include improper alignment at the address position; closed clubface at address or on the backswing; failure to turn the hips, and over-emphasis of advice to "keep the head down."

These causes and their solutions will be detailed on the following pages.
Push Error 1: Aiming to the right of target

When a golfer addresses the ball so that lines across his shoulders, hips and toes would point to the right of target, he is in an ideal position to push the shot. When the golfer’s body is aimed to the right of target, he will have insufficient freedom to swing his hands and arms through the impact area on a line to the target.

Instead, his hands and arms will tend to swing on paths parallel to the feet, hips and shoulders — paths to the right of target. The hands and arms will push the club head — and in turn the ball — to the right as the club head moves from inside to outside, instead of along, the correct target line.
Push cure 1: Address the ball with a slightly open stance

To cure the push we must make sure that the club head contacts the ball while moving along the target line.

To achieve this toward-the-target club head movement we must allow the hands and arms sufficient room to move in that direction. The left side must not block their paths.

By addressing the ball with a slightly open stance — with the left foot pulled farther back than the right from the target line — the left side will also be turned clear of the hands’ and arms’ intended paths. If this address position is duplicated at impact, the hands and arms will be free to move the club head along the target line at impact.
Push Error 2: Clubface closed at address or early in backswing

It would appear that the golfer who addresses the ball with a closed clubface (facing left of target), or who closes it on the takeaway, is headed for a severe hook.

However, I'd say that 85 per cent of golfers who see and/or feel their clubface in this hooded position will instinctively compensate. They will naturally open the clubface at the top of the backswing to counteract the impending hook.

This open clubface, along with the golfer's desire to keep the shot from going left, will result in his pushing the ball to the right.
Push cure 2: Address ball with a square clubface and feel that it opens slightly on the takeaway

Normally I would not advocate a conscious opening of the clubface on the takeaway. However, for the player who is in the habit of closing the face going back, this is not bad advice. Such a player may feel that he is opening the face, but actually he will be taking it back more or less square to the target line. When the golfer feels that his clubface is already open, he will experience no compulsion to fight a hook. He will not open the face at the top of the swing; nor will he attempt to push the ball to the right.
Push Error 2: Failure to continue the body turn through impact

Some "pushers" have the correct address position and takeaway. These golfers usually make their mistake just before and during contact with the ball. There has been a popular conception that the hips slide into the ball on the downswing. This is true to a certain extent, but if this lateral sliding is overdone a push may result. If the hips slide, rather than turn, on the downswing, the left hip may block the hands and arms as they move toward the target. In turn, the club head will have no chance to move toward the target. It will be pushed to the outside.
Push cure 3: Turn left side to clear a path for the hands and arms

There is enough lateral motion of the hips and legs in the downswing without consciously sliding the hips. The golfer should merely move his weight to the left side at the start of his downswing. Then he should let the left hip turn clear of the oncoming hands and arms so that they can move the club head along the target line, rather than to the outside.

This turning of the left hip also cushions the force of the swing. The right-handed golfer who finishes with his left ankle bent severely toward the target has probably minimized his hip turn on the downswing.
Push error 4: Overemphasis of advice to "keep the head down"

We have already noted that failure to continue the hip turn through impact can force the hands and arms to push the ball to the right. This failure to turn the left hip out of the way may be caused by keeping the head down for too long a period after the ball has been sent into flight.

Obviously, it is difficult to turn the shoulders and hips when such turning is restricted by a head that refuses to follow suit.
Push cure 3: Allow the head to turn naturally with the follow-through

I feel it is just as wrong to consciously restrict head-turning on the follow-through as it is to lift the head abruptly before impact. The head should be allowed to swivel toward the ball's flight as the hands move upward toward the finish of the swing.

By not committing himself beforehand to a rigid "head down" position, the golfer will allow not only his head, but also his shoulders and hips, the freedom they need for proper turning on the down and through stroke.
Cure Pulling

The pulled shot is one that travels in more or less a straight line, but to the left of target.

Like its counterpart, the push, which flies on a straight line, but to the right of target, the pulled shot usually "feels good" since it is struck with the meat of the clubface in a square, rather than glancing blow.

The pull, though squarely met, goes left because the clubhead is moving from outside to inside, across the target line, during impact. This is directly opposed to the push, which finds the clubhead moving from inside to outside the imaginary line from ball to target.

It is impossible to pull a shot without the clubhead moving in the outside-in pattern.

Thus, to correct a pull the golfer must ascertain what is causing the outside-in swing. He or she must then replace such a movement with a pattern that finds the clubhead moving from inside the target line, to along this line during impact, and then returning to the inside after the ball is away — in short, an inside-in clubhead pattern.

Causes of the pulled shot are usually found in failure to properly coil the body on the backswing: failure to shift weight to the right on the backswing and the left on the downswing, and failure to delay uncocking of the wrists on the downswing.

All of these faults will produce an outside-in clubhead movement and, in turn, pulled shots.

It is not surprising that persons who normally are plagued with sliced shots to the right occasionally discover their shots pulling to the left. The reason for this is that the outside-in clubhead path is inherent to both the slice and the pull. The only difference between the two is the position of the clubface during impact. In the case of the slice it faces directly at, or to the right of, the target. In the pull it is slightly closed to the left of target.

On the following pages the detail specific causes of the pulled shot and supply cures for each cause will be provided.
Pull error 1: Swaying, or moving the body laterally to the right, on the backswing

As a golfer sways to the right on the backswing, it is only natural that the club head may move outside the target line.

Thus, it is likely that the club will return to the ball from the outside. A pull, or a slice, will be the result.
Pull cure 1: Coil the body around a fixed "axis" on the backswing

Imagine that you have a pole running from inside your right foot, up your right leg and through the top of your head.

Then make sure that your head, shoulders and hips swivel around this pole on the backswing, without moving laterally to the right.

The result will be a coiling of shoulder, back and leg muscles which, in turn, will cause the club head to move inside the target line.
Pull error 2: Weight remains on the left side during the backswing

Failure to shift some weight to the right foot on the backswing often causes a player to shift it to the right on the downswing instead — to fall back on his right foot. This, in turn, forces the club head outside the target line.
Pull cure 2: Allow weight to shift to inside the right foot on the backswing

The player should feel a rhythmical motion that moves his weight momentarily to the right foot. Then, this weight should return to the left foot immediately at the start of the downswing with a turn of the left hip and a lowering of the left heel. This proper weight shifting will enable the player to take the club back on the inside and retain it there throughout the downswing.
Pull error 3: Hitting from the top
Then we have the golfer who has proper coiling and weight transfer on the backswing, but who jerks the club down to the ball in his anxiety to put the shot into flight.
This premature uncocking of wrists on the downswing destroys the flowing motion of weight to the left side. Instead the weight remains on the right foot and the club head enters the hitting area from outside the target line.
Pull cure 3: Allow the wrists to uncock naturally into the ball

The player should feel that everything is moving to the left on downswing in a smooth, unhurried fashion, pulling the still-cocked wrists down and through the ball. There should be no sensation of forcing the club. The wrists should uncock naturally as result of the uncoiling of the shoulders.
Pull error 4: "Flying" right elbow

When the wrists are uncocked too early on the downswing, the right elbow tends to move away from the body. This, along with a poor weight shift, forces the club head outside target line.
Pull cure 4: Keep right elbow in tight

If the wrists are allowed to "break" naturally, the club head will move from inside the target line and meet the ball squarely at impact. Returning the right elbow to a point close to the body early in the downswing is an aid in this direction. Combine this with a weight shift to the left side and the result will be a straight shot with no loss of power.
Shank – No thanks

Shanking — boy is that a nasty word in golf circles! In fact, it’s practically taboo among touring professionals to even mention the term. This habit of hitting the golf ball with the hosel or neck of the club, instead of the clubface, is one of the most demoralizing and most misunderstood of all bad shots.

The shank is a double-edged sword. First, it produces the worst type of shot result. The ball shoots off the club at almost a right angle to the target. The player at the other end of the club can almost certainly expect to lose at least one stroke — and possibly more, if the ball finishes off the fairway.

Second, the shank starts a vicious circle. It creates tension, even in the most skilled, easy-going players. And a tense golf swing, more likely than not, will produce more shanked shots. There is great misunderstanding about the shank. No doubt this lack of knowledge about its causes and cures contributes to this tension.

The shank strikes without warning. It hits good and bad players alike, often in competition when the golfer is under pressure, when his swing might not be in its normal groove. I doubt that any golfer who has suffered through a siege of shanking can watch someone else shank a shot without pondering a similar fate for himself on his next iron shot.

Because the shank produces so much mental anguish, one should not attempt to correct the habit on the course. To attempt correction during a round of play merely increases the chances of harming other phases of one’s game. It is best to seek a cure while on the practice tee where one can work under a minimum of pressure.

On the following pages we will discuss the shank’s most common causes and cures so that golfers will have a positive plan of action during these practice sessions.
Shank error 1: Swing has become too flat

When the club head at the top of the backswing points far to the left of the target, the swing is too flat. The swing arc is thus affected and a shanked shot is the result.
Shank cure 1: Make swing more upright

The proper swing finds the club head moving along a plane that more or less parallels an imaginary line, running from the ball to the suspension point of the swing at the base of the player's neck. The golfer's shoulders should not only turn, but also tilt, on the backswing.
Shank error 2: Straightening up

Straightening the body in the pelvic region during the backswing also tends to cause a flattening of the swing. This, in turn, throws the club head out of its proper plane during its course through the ball and produces contact with the neck of the club.
Shank cure 2: Maintain the suspension point at the same level throughout the swing

The suspension point at the base of the neck should not move forward or back, or up or down, during the swing. The player should address the ball by bending slightly from the waist with the knees a bit flexed. Neither the knees nor the back should straighten during the backswing.

Often the tendency to lift or straighten the body during the swing results from over-crouching at address.
Shank error 3: "Looping"

Looping occurs on the backswing when the player moves his head and shoulders forward and to the left so that they are more over the ball. This also moves his hands and club outside their normal position at the top of the swing so that they too are more over the ball.

This forces the club head to return to the ball from the outside, increasing chances for the ball to be impacted at the hosel instead of the clubface.
Shank cure 3: Fuller turn or pivot

This looping tendency will disappear if one takes a slightly fuller turn with his hips and shoulders on the backswing, taking care at the same time not to flatten the swing.

One should feel that his chin remains pointed at the ball, or where the ball was, throughout the downswing and until after the ball is struck.
Shank error 4: Standing too far from the ball

This is actually what a shank is. Once a golfer understands the principle of a shanked shot, there is a tendency to stand farther away from the ball at the address. This increases the problem because the swing becomes even flatter.
Shank cure 4: Stand closer to ball and accentuate tilting and turning the shoulders

By lowering the left shoulder and raising the right shoulder on the backswing, the resulting downswing follows a more upright plane. The club head then meets the ball squarely at impact.
Curing Fat Shots (Scalfing)

If you hit the big ball (earth) before contacting the golf ball, you are guilty of "scalfing" or hitting a "fat" shot — a real block to low scoring.

Hitting the ground first is bad on two counts. First, it slows the club head an instant before its all-important contact with the ball. Second, it produces poor contact as grass and/or earth come between the clubface and the ball.

There are several causes of, and cures for, fat shots. We will elaborate on some of the most common errors and corrections on the following pages.

In doing so we will refer to the "suspension point" of the swing. This is the center of the golfer's spine at the base of his or her neck.

This is the point of a golfer's body which should be correctly positioned during the swing, lest bad shots — including the scalf — result. The suspension point should remain constant throughout the swing.
Scalfing error 1: Crouching at the address position, thus lowering the suspension point

This is probably the most common cause of fat shots. The player positions himself in an address position that has his suspension point closer to the ball than the total distance formed by the length of his arms and the part of the club below his hands. This crouching, and the lowering of the suspension point that results, causes a bent-arm position at address.

Obviously, if the player maintains this incorrect suspension point position up to and during impact, and if he correctly extends his arms when club meets ball, then his extended arms will cause the club head to be lower at impact than it was at address.

The club head will cut into the ground behind the ball. Your shot will finish far short of the target, especially if the turf is soggy.
Scalping cure 1: Shorten the swing radius or raise the suspension point

Because the radius of the swing arc (formed by the arms and club) is longer than the distance from the suspension point to the ball, an obvious correction is to shorten the radius. This is done simply by shortening one's grip on the club — "choking up," as they call it in baseball. The advantage of this correction is that it eliminates the scalping almost immediately. The disadvantage is that by shortening the radius of the swing, you automatically shorten the swing, and usually lose distance.

The second correction — raising the suspension point — if anything, will widen your swing arc by causing you to address the ball with the arms more extended. More distance may result. You raise the suspension point by merely addressing the ball with a more upright posture.
Scalping error 2: Lowering the suspension point during the swing

Even a golfer with a good posture at the address position may hit fat shots if he ducks his head — thus lowering his suspension point — during his backswing or downswing.

This more subtle cause of scalping also causes the suspension point to be closer to the ball at impact than the total length of the swing's radius — the arms and club.

Obviously the player cannot hit the ball squarely with arms extended. He must either hit it fat or fold his arms to compensate for the shortened distance between the suspension point and the ball.
Scalping cure 2: Maintain a consistent distance from the suspension point to the ball throughout the swing

The cure in this case is somewhat more difficult to accomplish since it involves avoiding any ducking of the head during the swing.

To keep from ducking the head, I would advise swinging without a club, while your forehead is pressed against a vertical object such as a tree, post or wall.

This will give you an idea of how it feels to swing without lowering your head — in effect, without lowering your suspension point. Then duplicate this feeling without the post and with a club.
Scalping error 3: Improperly fitted clubs that are too "whippy" for your swing
Too flexible a club shaft can produce fat shots even though the player's address position and swing are correct. Clubs that are too whippy cause a vibratory cycle, or bending in the shaft, which is so great that the club head drags along the ground.
Scalping cure 3: Check shaft flex

Anyone who has troubles with fat shots should consult his pro about the possibility of using stiffer shafts. This is especially good advice for players who are strong and have forceful swings with a great deal of club head speed.

A strong player sacrifices control if he uses too-whippy shafts, just as a weak swinger (women golfers take note) might lose club head speed by using too stiff a shaft.
Scalping error 4: During the swing, increasing the angle formed by the arms and club shaft

The most subtle reason for fat shots occurs when the player, during the swing, causes the arms and club shaft to form more of a straight line than they did at address.

In a proper address position the arms should hang almost vertically, at about an 85 degree angle (Angle A'). The club shaft is supported in a somewhat more horizontal position (Angle C). Together they form an angle of less than 180 degrees (Angle B').

If, during the swing, the player increases the angle formed by his arms and club shaft so that they form more of a straight line (angle B), the old principle that a straight line reaches farther than a crooked one of the same length comes into effect. The club head extends beyond the ball — or into the ground.
Scalping cure 4: Maintain the same arm-club angle at impact that you assumed at the address position

To keep this angle (B') constant at address and impact the golfer should first address the ball with his arms and club shaft positioned in about the same manner as in the "correct" drawing above. Arms hang at about an 85° angle.

Then he should maintain the same amount of grip pressure throughout the swing.

If he maintains constant grip pressure during the swing, the golfer will avoid arching his wrists. He will thus be able to hold the proper arm-club angle (B').

Also one should practice hefting his club vertically in front of him so that he becomes aware of the hand and forearm muscles that increase or decrease angle B'.
Topping – The Surefire Way To Eliminate It

There are three basic elements that determine the success or failure of any golf swing:

- The arc formed by the clubhead.
- The angle or plane of the swing, formed by the arms and club; and determined largely by the ball's position in relation to the stance, the amount of shoulder tilt, and movement of the hands.
- The motion or flow of the swing.

In the case of topped shots — where the ball is usually contacted above center - the basic fault should be charged as an "arc" error. However, the above fundamentals of "angle" and "motion" can spoil the arc, and thus be indirectly guilty.

The ideal swing - one which would seldom produce a topped shot - would find:

- The feet and legs producing a firm foundation for balance and swing power, as well as movement, rhythm, and measurement in returning the club squarely to the ball.
- The left shoulder-arm unit serving as a fixed radius for the club head arc from takeaway through impact.
- The right arm hinging at the elbow on the backswing, then straightening (or nearly so) at impact.

In other words, a player would avoid topped shots if he could duplicate at impact a correct address position of his legs, left shoulder-arm unit, and right arm.

Frequently there is no single fault that produces a bad shot; just as no single point, if properly executed, can assure a perfect shot. Often there is a basic fault and several related faults. The big problem or challenge in teaching golf is to detect the basic error.
However, on the following pages we will point out some causes of topped shots in the hope that the reader can play the pro's role and detect the one fundamental error which is causing his or her topped shots.
Topping error 1: "Scooping"

Probably the most common cause of the topped shot originates in the golfer's mind when he consciously or unconsciously feels that he must scoop beneath the ball to put it into flight. Such thinking is especially common on the pitch shots where the player wants maximum height.

The player then leans or tilts his body to the right on the downswing, apparently trying to put himself "under the ball." This usually restricts the forward motion of the coordinated swing and results in an upward lift or scoop with the arms and hands.

This causes the club head to rise abruptly at the ball and frequently catch it above center. An exaggeration of this may lower the right side so much that the club head jams into the ground behind the ball. Thus, scooping can also be a cause of "fat" shots.
Topping cure 1: Trust the loft of your club

All clubs, even the driver, have sufficient built-in loft to put a golf ball into flight without any conscious scooping effort on the part of the player.

In fact, a ball is more likely to rise if backspin has been applied to it with a down and through motion of the club head at impact. Though it can be overdone, advice to "hit down on the ball" probably will help anyone who has a tendency to scoop shots.

A gimmick, originated by J. Victor East, has helped convince pupils who don't trust their club loft. The pupil is asked to hit over some tree branches. He usually tries to scoop the ball and invariably tops the shot. Then he’s asked to hit under the branches. Now he hits the ball correctly with a downward blow, and, to his amazement, the ball flies over the limbs.
Topping cure 1: Improper grip

Any abnormal grip can destroy the proper club head arc and thus produce topped shots. However, the most common grip fault that results in hitting the ball above center is to have the right, or bottom, hand turned too far to the right, or under, the shaft.

This right hand grip has the shaft largely in the palm and directly across it. Such a grip is fine in the baseball swing when a player is trying to contact a ball at, say, chest height.

However in golf, with the ball resting on the ground, this grip merely encourages closing the clubface and lifting the club head "over" the ball.
Topping cure 2: Proper grip

In a correct golf grip, the player should grasp the club largely in the fingers of his bottom hand. Thus, when this hand is closed around the shaft, the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger will point between the player's chin and his right shoulder.

I also advocate that the player see two knuckles of his left, or top, hand when he addresses the ball.

This is the best grip to produce a club head path that will connect squarely with a ball that is at ground level. Even "non-toppers" should develop a proper grip. A bad grip is a direct cause of most swing errors.
Topping error 3: Improper positioning of the ball and club head at address

Topped shots can result from any positioning that affects the swing arc. The club head, if positioned too far behind the ball (left) will cause the club to meet the ball on the upswing unless swing compensations are made. The same is true when the ball is played too far forward in the stance (center). The club head may contact the top of the ball on the downswing if the ball is played too far back in the stance (right).
Topping cure 3: Proper positioning of the ball and club head at address

While professionals vary slightly in ball positioning, there is a "safety zone" in which the ball should be played. This safety zone is between the center of the stance and the left heel. When the ball is positioned within this area, and when the club head is placed close behind the ball, the swing arc need not be altered; and a square hit should result.
Topping error 3: Too much crouch at address position

This problem is more apt to occur with relatively short shots. Thinking ho is getting more control by getting closer to the ball, the golfer is actually losing control by forcing the arms away from the body. In this position, there is little hope of controlling the club head.
Topping cure 4: More upright stance - arms in tight to body

Allow arms to "measure" the proper distance to the ball. Try to "feel" the arms in close to your body. Then, when starting the backswing, the pivot will help turn the arms naturally to the correct position.
Topping error 5: Lack of arm and wrist control

With the arms away from the body and the wrists acting independently, there is little chance that the ball will be hit squarely. There are too many opportunities for the club head to stray.
Topping cure 5: Square club head contact through control of arms and wrists

The address position should be more or less duplicated at impact. It is comparatively easy to accomplish this if you can think of the wrists as a continuation of the arms, working together in a rhythmic grooved approach to the hitting area.
Topping error 6: Too much weight on the toes or heels

A frequent cause of topping is placing too much weight on the toes, either at the address position or during the swing. This forward weight causes the player to lose some balance during the swing. With his weight forward, he unconsciously tries to regain balance by folding his arms. This, in turn, causes the club head to swing "over the ball" and catch it above center.

Too much weight on the heels can also cause the arms to lift the club head, though this is not so common a cause of topping as is too much weight on the toes.
Topping cure 6: Correct weight distribution at the address position, with the knees slightly bent

The weight should be equally distributed between the ball and the heel of each foot. If anything, the weight should be slightly "inside" - on the instep side of each foot.

The feet and the legs should be at "relaxed attention" in the address position. As with the runner just before the gun, they should be prepared for action, but not to the point that they are tense. A slight bending of the knees will help you achieve this feeling. It will enable you to execute a balanced swing wherein your weight does not move too much onto the toes or the heels.
Topping error 7: Over-emphasizing advice to "keep your head down"

I feel that if taken literally, advice to keep your head down is of questionable value. It can be a major cause of topped shots. Over-emphasis of "head down" frequently causes such a restriction in the shoulder turn on the down and through swing that the arc is spoiled, and the arms fold upward, pulling the club head over the ball.

"Head down" might even cause a player to unconsciously lower his or her head as the club moves into the hitting area. This often promotes a folding of the arms and results in a topped shot.

Naturally the other extreme - looking up - can cause a raising that also lifts the club head. However, this is usually caused by indecision and resulting restriction. The mental attitude should be positive and the swing free and trustful.
Topping cure 7: Keep the head steady until impact. Then let it turn with the follow-through

The left shoulder should be rising at impact and the head should be allowed to turn with the club on the through stroke. The only things that should be truly "down" are the gradually downward descent of the club head and the straightening down and through of the right arm.

There should be a sensation of "staying up" with the head, while the arms extend or reach down to the ball. If a player strives to feel "tall" when he addresses the ball, and then duplicates his address position at impact, he will reach for the ball at impact and avoid the folded arms which produce the topped shot.
Resources

Handicap Tracking Software:

Golf Intel Performance Software Handicaptracker

Free Video Analysis Software:

http://www.v1golfacademy.com/v1home.asp

Golf Swing Analysis Videos

Analysis of Tiger’s Swing

I don't know about you, but I've heard a lot of gurus try and make themselves sound smart by "explaining" what Tiger does.

These explanations are usually completely useless in terms of information that helps my game.

But this video is different. The more I watched and listened to Tracy, the more excited I became.

Recommended Golf Swing Systems:

Tracy Reeds Golf Swing Control

Tracy explains very well how you can get more power and correct your swing yourself by using the dynamic balancing concept. You get free videos on the setup, backswing and the transition by clicking the link above.

PurePoint Golf DVD series

Complete golf instruction video program by Bobby Eldridge, a top teaching pro. Cover the full swing, short game, driver, how to hit a draw, bunker shots and putting. Easy to learn step-by-step program with excellent support.