

PITCHING CONCEPTS



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INTRODUCTION

My name is Chris Ardolina and I have been teaching all levels of golfers for the better part of 15 years. I have taught all over the country and had the privilege to learn from some of the best coaches in the world.

In this short E-Book, I will take the reader through a series of principles and teach him or her how to move dynamically through a set of static positions. This comprehension of the correct concepts and creating a solid foundation with sound fundamentals, is what I refer to as establishing a baseline.



KEY TERMS

Body

Lead: part of body closer to target.

Trail: part of body further from target.

Extension: movement that increase the angle between two body parts.

Flexion: movement that decreases angle between two body parts.

Radial Deviation: movement of wrist bending towards the thumb.

Ulnar Deviation: movement of wrist bending towards the little finger.



Club

Flat: lie angle of club closer to ground.

Upright: lie angle of club further from ground.

Steep: angle of the golf shaft in the swing that is more vertical (greater) than the original lie angle of the club.

Shallow: angle of the golf shaft in the swing that is more horizontal (less) than the original lie angle of the golf club.

Shaft Lean: angle of golf shaft toward target.

Bounce: the angle formed between the leading edge and lowest part of the sole.

Loft: the number of degrees the club face is angled upward.

Delofted: to lessen the club face angle to upward





A Pitch is a lofted shot played from around the putting green.

- Played with a lofted club.
- Travels in the air more than it rolls on the ground.
- Has a higher trajectory and greater amount of spin.
- Used when trying to hit over something or when a hazard and/or trouble is between the ball and hole.



THE SETUP

FOUNDATION THAT KEEPS EVERYTHING FUNCTIONAL



- Pressure is about 60% on the lead side, located in the middle of the foot.
- Ball position can vary, depending on the desired trajectory.
 - Back In Stance = Low
 - Middle Of Stance = Medium
 - Forward In Stance = High
- Hands can vary in position depending on desired trajectory.
 - Hands Forward = Low Trajectory
 - Hands Middle = Medium Trajectory
 - Hands Back = High Trajectory

- Feet set parallel to target line or slightly open, with lead foot flared out.
- Club face slightly open to expose the bounce.
- Place hands lower on the handle.
- Move closer to the ball.
- Club shaft angle may vary depending on the shot being played.
 - More upright = Lower Trajectory
 - Flatter = Higher Trajectory
- Eyes look down at top of ball

THE BACKSWING

FRAMEWORK THAT ALLOWS FOR PROPER SEQUENCING



- Pressure remains on lead side (does not shift to trail side).
- Upper and lower body rotate slightly, while staying centered over the ball.
- Lead arm remains extended and moves in unison with turn of upper body.
- Length of the back swing depends on the distance of the shot being played.
 - Hip Height = Short Distance
 - Sternum Height = Medium Distance
 - Shoulder Height = Long Distance



- Lead shoulder turns down as trail hip turns up and back, in order to maintain posture.
- Wrists hinge radially as the shoulder and arm move away from target.
- Butt end of club should point somewhat at the target line or slightly inside the target line.
- Relationship between club face and wrist orientation should remain the same as at setup.

THE DOWNSWING

DYNAMIC MOTION THAT CREATES AN ADVANTAGEOUS IMPACT POSITION

End of Backswing



A) Transition



B) Halfway Down



C) 3/4 Way Down



A) At the start of the downswing the player's body begins to unwind towards the target. As the upper and lower body begin to rotate, the arms fall and the club shaft shallows ever so slightly. The wrist and club face angles remain the same, while the pressure in the lead foot begins to increase.

B) As the body continues to rotate, the angle between the trail wrist and the club shaft begins to widen. The arms remain passive as the player reaches the halfway position. The club shaft arrives somewhat parallel to the target line with the club head either in line, slightly inside or slightly outside the hands (any of these variations are okay).

C) Moving down towards the ball, the body, arms and club move in sync as the pressure in the lead foot gradually increases. Biomechanics graphs may show a different sequence of movement, but this idea of synchronization is to keep things simple. The body proceeds to open while the angle between the trail wrist and the club shaft widens a bit more as it reaches impact.

IMPACT

THE ONLY FACTOR THE BALL ACTUALLY CARES ABOUT



**DESCENDING ANGLE OF ATTACK
INTO THE BACK OF THE BALL.**

**LOW POINT & GROUND INTERACTION
OCCUR IN FRONT OF BALL.**



- Pressure 85-90% in lead leg.
- Hands return to a position slightly ahead of club head.
 - More shaft lean = lower trajectory
 - Less shaft lean = higher trajectory
- Upper and lower body rotated open in relation to target line.
- Club face becomes delofted a few degrees (dynamic loft).

THE FINISH

LAST PIECE OF THE PUZZLE

Moving out of impact into the finish, the lead leg will continue to lengthen causing the lead hip to rise and turn back away from the target line. Simultaneously, the chest and core will rotate open, while the arms remain passive and the spine extends upward.



Stick the finish!

- 100% of pressure is in lead foot.
- Sternum, waist and eyes turned and looking at the target.
- Both the lead and trail arm remain relaxed and connected to upper rib cage . The arms appear to be somewhat extended, but not rigid.
- The spine is extended upward.
- The loft on club face is maintained

FINAL THOUGHTS



The Setup

The key to a good setup is proper balance points. A player must start off balanced in order for all the movements of the swing to be harmonized.



The Backswing

The backswing does not have to look "perfect" it just has to be functional. A good backswing is formed when the club and body are stabilized; therefore, allowing the player to easily transition into a effective downswing.



The Downswing

The downswing sequence heavily influences the impact position and the overall outcome of the shot. It is important that hands remain somewhat passive in order to minimize the manipulation of the club face into impact.



Impact Position

A good impact position produces the player's desired ball flight. Impact is a direct correlation to how the player moves from the top of the backswing through the downswing.



The Finish

The finish is the completion of the swing and should be both balanced and structured. It should tell a story about the swing the player made. Hopefully its a good story!



Pitch Simplified

The pitch shot is merely a connected turn of the upper body over a braced lower half with a hinge of the wrists. It is then followed by an unwinding of the upper body and unhinging of the wrists. Simply put, turn and hinge the club to sky, then turn and point the club to the target.



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