

Triangulaid Swing

Rotating the hips all the way through the shot takes you to a balanced finish - hold it for 7 seconds as you watch the flight of the ball to its conclusion

Weight shifts naturally, right side to left side as you swing - just as it does when you walk

No sooner have you placed your left foot into a natural stance position and you're off, making your backswing in that same walking pace rhythm

With the club in front of you, lead in with the right foot as you place it behind the ball

Natural walking pace establishes the rhythm of your motion as you take three steps towards the ball

PART ONE Time to leave behind those pre-conceptions about the golf swing, the technical thoughts that have failed to improve your game, and to open your mind to a more natural way of playing the game you love. A good golf technique can - and *should* - be as natural as walking, as 2003 French Open champion Philip Golding illustrates here. A flowing, *swinging* motion can be yours if you learn to trust in your natural movement.

Originally pioneered by Welsh professional Bill Owens in 1991, the concepts of 'Triangulaid' provide a logical solution for everyday club golfers who would love

nothing more than the pleasure of playing *natural* golf. Many of the problems that we see in the game today stem from the fact that people are obsessed with playing 'swing' rather than actually playing the game. Wrapped up in the mechanics of what they think they should be doing, they forget that the goal is to make a golf *swing* - not a 'hit' - to propel the ball towards the hole.

To find such pleasure, Triangulaid places the emphasis on doing what comes naturally and encouraging individual character to shine through. Improvements in club technology have helped to make this possible; just as skiing instructors coach

differently today, thanks to parabolic skis that make the sport easier for all levels, so coaching in golf should reflect the fact that modern equipment tolerates a swing that is less than perfect. We have the tools to enjoy good ball striking with a swing based on natural motion.

My belief is that the vast majority of golfers out there can improve their game immediately if they let go of clichés and pre-conceptions and learn to embrace the natural motion that lies within. This is a state of mind as much as anything else. So, the first step here is to do away with old habits and prepare to explore new sensations as you find your natural golf swing.

As Jack Nicklaus always said, good golf starts from the ground up. To find your natural movement, you have to engage with the sensations in your feet - the interaction you have with the ground. The true rhythm of your swing matches exactly your natural walking rhythm. The kinetic chain comes from the feet - you have to use the energy you absorb from the ground to inspire a natural sequence of movement in the body. Feel it through your toes. The arms are like heavy ropes, relaxed as they hang from your shoulders - they *respond* to movement from the feet, not the reverse.

Do you consciously think about controlling your arms as you walk? No, of course

not, because they are allowed to *flow* with the logical chain of movement that originates in the feet. The same ordered sequence must be allowed to happen in your golf swing. To gain control of ball flight, you have to *lose* control of your swing; you have to let your arms swing freely in response to the turning motion of your body, to the right and then left (as long as your grip and set-up is perfect - more on that in the next issue).

For fun, try this walk-in exercise. Feel your walking rhythm morph into a natural swing, your focus purely on where you want the ball to go. Your first steps, literally, to a *flowing* swing.

Technically speaking, walking is almost impossible to teach, like a golf swing. And yet it could be as simple as placing one foot in front of the other...and playing to your natural rhythm. In the first of a two-part series, **Stéphane Bachoz** introduces principles of the Triangulaid coaching system - which he describes as being 'as efficient as it is unconventional' - in a bid to help you experience the sensations, balance and coordination of a natural motion



By Stéphane Bachoz

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Learn to dance with the club – feel it in your footwork/toes

Let your arms hang freely from the shoulders - make them feel heavy, like rope. By looking with eyes forward - not down - you will feel the balance more readily in your toes

Release the left foot to initiate the motion as you turn freely away from the target - you don't walk without raising the left heel, and it similarly facilitates a flowing natural swing

'Sink' the knees a little as you shift into the through-swing - this little squat will increase gravity and add speed to the club

Keep your momentum going all the way to a straight finish, chest facing left of your target

"When you look forward - and not down - you will find you immediately aware of the sensation of movement and balance in your toes!"

The routine I am rehearsing here is one that you should use to get in touch with your natural rhythm as you place the emphasis on foot and leg action, turning back and forth. Free your mind of technical thoughts and simply recreate your natural walking rhythm.

Let your arms hang freely so that you are able to hook that club across your back, just above the hips, and then enhance the sensations in the toes as you create a dance, turning away from and then towards your imaginary target. Keep your eyes looking out direction in front (don't look down), and flow your weight from one side to the other. Feel your

head turning in time with the movement of your right foot as you turn onto the right side and then again in harmony with the movement to the left side en route to the finish.

I don't want you to think about creating 'resistance' with the hips, or flexing the right knee - forget those notions. They actually inhibit motion. Instead, I want you to let your body rotate as freely as you can in time with that footwork. Understand that the 'gesture' from the lower body must be allowed to filter all the way up through to the swinging of the arms - essential in the quest for a flowing swing.

The key to this footwork is allowing the left

foot to initiate the backswing rotation to the right (for the right-handed player) and have a solid support on the right foot. In return, you then spring off your right foot to reverse the rotation back towards the target. Finish on your left side - and hold it for 7 seconds!

Rhythm is an essential element of swing. It's up to you to identify with your own natural pace. The best solution is to swing the same way as you walk. Look at Fred Couples and Ernie Els: they walk and swing slowly, this does not prevent them from being as powerful as Padraig Harrington, for example, who is walking and swinging more quickly.

Identify your ideal, natural golf posture

There is no such thing as a 'text-book' posture - we are all of different height and build and so will each have our own ideal posture.

Here's a simple way to think about finding it - and the more you do this and improve the way you stand to the ball, the easier it will be to make a good, natural swing. Conjure in your mind images of Arthur, the skeleton used in medicine, and think of the way the arms hang vertically to the side when he is suspended - just as yours will if you stand straight and take a deep breath. (Your arms are the only part of the body that is suspended - the rest is stacked.) Now, bend from the pelvis and you will feel your arms hanging below your shoulders - suspended!

Now, to create a good spine angle, return to a tall standing position and hold a club down your back. You want to feel 2 points of contact: (1) where the club touches the back of your head, and (2) where the shaft touches your tail-bone. Ideally you want the lower part of your back to touch the shaft for about 10cm. That's comfortably straight, not curved.

Keeping that club firmly in place, tilt your upper body forwards from the pelvis to experience the sensation of creating good spine angle at the set-up; can you still feel those 2 contact points?

Just as I am demonstrating on the opposite page, release your arms and let them be as free as they can be. They hang directly below the shoulders and are now ready to respond to the movement of your body during the swing. You will add a final sense of motion and natural athleticism if you then just flex the knees gently.

You are now in a position to make a flowing movement - one that is based on the feeling you take from the ground.



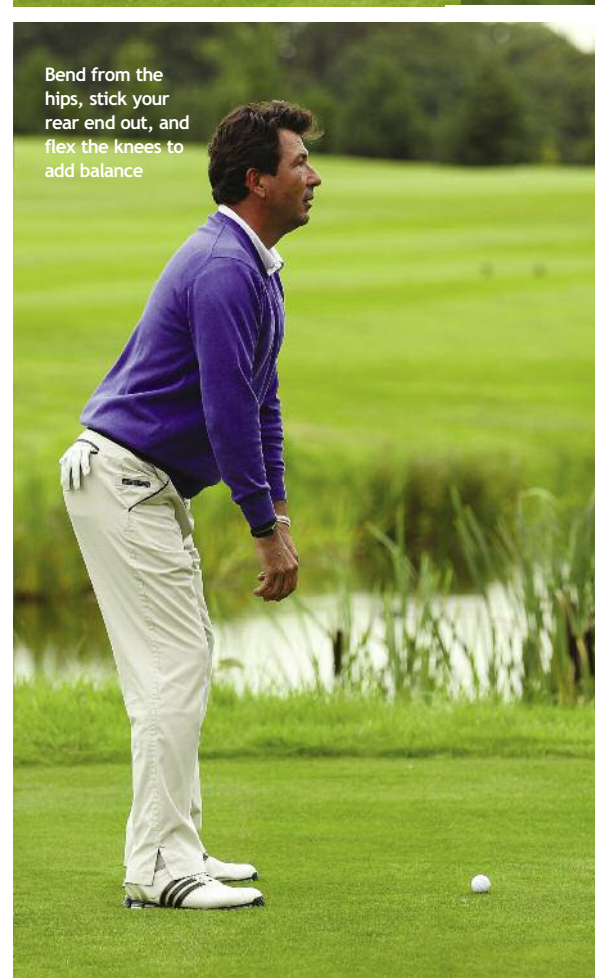
Stand tall and take a long deep breath to fully inflate your chest



Exhale fully as you bend from the hips, add a little flex to the knees and allow the arms to hang



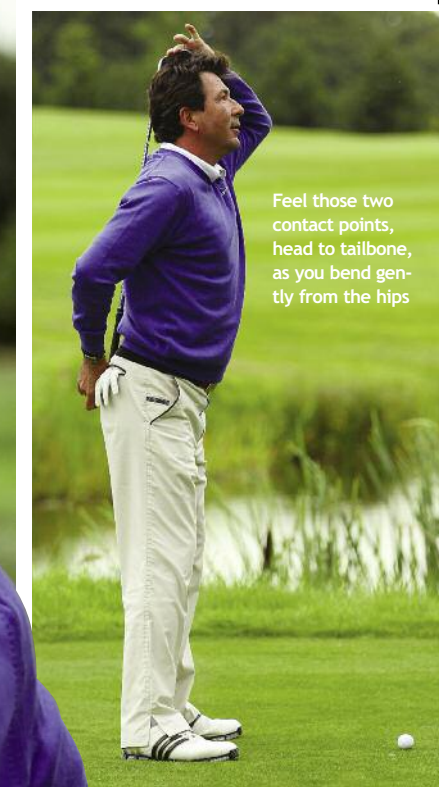
Shoulders back, chest out and arms relaxed and suspended at your side



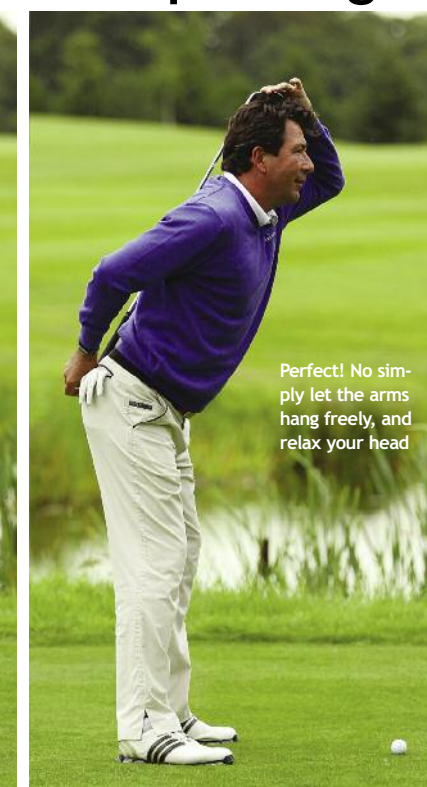
Bend from the hips, stick your rear end out, and flex the knees to add balance



Bend from the hips for spine angle



Feel those two contact points, head to tailbone, as you bend gently from the hips



Perfect! No simply let the arms hang freely, and relax your head

Pulling a club against your spine like this heightens your awareness for the angle you create as you bend gently from the hips/pelvis. Try to keep the club in contact with your tail-bone and the top of your head as you ease your upper body forward and then flex your knees to add a sense of balance to your overall posture. Then release the arms and let them hang.



Relax your head to complete a good posture - make it comfortable. Feel the weight of the arm-club unit hanging down



GET RID OF PARASITES! Look straight ahead, take your

mind off the ball, and feel motion and balance in your toes



Experience the simplicity of a natural walking 'swing'...

To summarise thus far: we are looking for a natural movement that shares the same rhythm as your regular walking pace; a movement that is inspired by the natural kinetic chain working from the feet-knees-

hips-chest-shoulders-arms, and we are doing this without a single technical thought in mind. I hope you can sense the flowing motion in this sequence, which you may have noticed I have made without looking at

the ball. There's a reason for that. When you walk you look into the distance - you don't look down at all potential hazards that might trip you over. You instinctively know where to place your feet. Drawing on that

...and not a technical thought in your head!

notion, making a golf swing without looking at the ball is a wonderful exercise that enables you to focus on making a fluent swing without being fixated on the ball. Feel the inertia and the weight of the arm-club

unit moving around you. Let your arms and the club respond to your natural body movement. Do not try to hit the ball, simply let it get in the way of the clubhead - it has the force on its side.

You will find that in doing this you forget all of those negative instructions that typically run through your mind - the parasites that are so good at ruining a natural swing!

NO FINISH, NO FUTURE! "I am the ball" – hold it for 7 seconds, the 'drop down' completes the swing

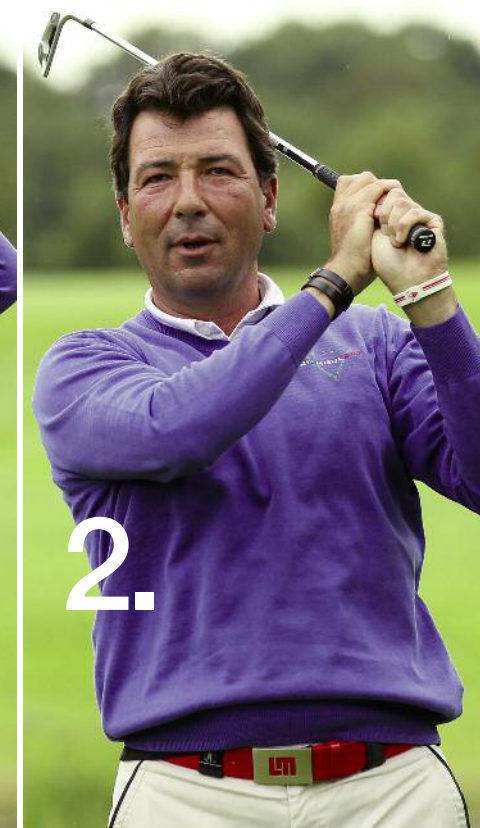
I tell all of my pupils to find their finish and hold it for 7 seconds. I don't know where I came up with the number, it just seems right somehow. Doing this enables you to watch the ball until it stops completely (and avoid losing it!), and also to check your balance all the way to this 'drop down' of the arms.

All coaches agree on this point: If you want to hit solid and consistent shots, you need to focus on making a full and balanced follow-through.

The priority is to rotate your hips all the way through so that you are able to find your balance on the left leg (right for lefties) and 'live' the flight of your ball into your finish. Swing your hands all the way around behind your head and then let the arms fall down in time with the flight of the ball, the club coming to rest on your left shoulder.

The finish is more important than the swing. Even if you hit a bad shot, finish your move. You will be well surprised at the results very quickly!

I am exaggerating the length of swing with a lazy rhythm, but the key is to simply to allow your hands and arms to swing the club over the right shoulder. Do not try and control it - let the arms respond to the movement all the way from the toes up



1. Unwind all the way to a full finish, the hands now over the left shoulder, chest and belt buckle aiming left of target
2. Keep the same pressure in both hands until the end
3. And there is the final swing position - 'I am the ball'!



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Triangulaid

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Chi-Power GOLF: There's no getting away from golf's fundamentals

Jayne Storey brings you more advice based on the ancient principles of Tai Chi - in this issue reinforcing the value of mastering the fundamentals of the game, which can add a new dimension to your practice routine and have an immediate positive effect on the course

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Triangulaid A triangle that helps!

Last issue PGA of France member Stéphane Bachoz introduced some of the refreshing ideas behind Triangulaid, a teaching concept devised specifically for higher-handicap players and yet one that has the potential to help all golfers to make a more Natural Golf Swing. Here, in part 2, Stéphane introduces the Triangle, and invites you to open your mind to experience new sensations that result in better and more consistent ball striking. (Don't knock it 'til you try it - former French Open champion Philip Gilling has been working on the principles of Triangulaid for the last two seasons and in 2011 recorded victories in the Paris Open and Bello Classic...)

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Motion from the ground up

Learning to rotate your hips correctly is vital if you are to engender and enjoy the correct sequencing of an athletic body action, explains Gf's Jonathan Yarwood

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'Dial-in' your wedges

Andrew Park, highlights the key elements of technique that you need to master for accurate, consistent wedge play - and there's a lot you can learn watching Luke Donald

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The Fear Factor

Over the coming issues we will be running exclusive extracts from Robin Slegers' latest book, *Golf's Moment of Truth*. To kick off, a look at how you can overcome fear & anxiety

TOP WRITING

Peter Alliss Robert Green
Clive Agran John Hopkins
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Tom Cox Jeremy Chapman



FOR THE BEGINNER.
The beauty of the Triangulaid system is that it can quickly help a beginner to experience the sensation of swinging into the ball along the desired INSIDE PATH. We use the Triangle to achieve this. A beginner would work on a wide margin of error – i.e. the lower body is aimed well to the left of the target line (represented by the white line nearest the tee) while the path of the swing runs severely in-to-out (the red line). In this fashion a player is trained to avoid the most destructive fault in golf – the over-the-top, outside-to-in swing.

EXPERT.
With a subtle adjustment of the angles, the Triangle can also be applied to help a very good player to work on his swing and specifically relate to the clubhead path. The angle is narrowed considerably, so the relative alignment of the lower body and the path is now closer to neutral. But having that slight margin of error works for the expert just as it does a beginner, helping the player to swing from the inside and hit a draw.

Triangulaid

A simple route to natural motion

By Stephane Bachoz

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW REDINGTON / GETTY

To each his swing...

Rhythm is an essential element of swing. While some are looking to 'explode' the ball with a highly dynamic body action others operate on more flowing motion, swinging the golf club rather than hitting the ball. One of the beauties of this game is that there are many ways of playing it - as individuals we must learn to identify with our own natural rhythm, or tempo. At the heart of the system I teach is the mandate that the best solution is to swing the club the same way as you walk (as discussed in part 1 last issue). Look at Fred Couples and Ernie Els: they walk with a lazy, unhurried style and swing just the same way. This is their natural gait. Someone like Alvaro Quiros walks much more quickly - and his swing reflects that. Same is true of young Italian star Matteo Manassero, another who swings with an up-tempo beat.

One of the reasons for inconsistency among amateurs is that their swing speed is liable to change from one day to another - even one hole to another! The first thing I suggest to all of my pupils at my academy in Paris is that they try and train a natural tempo to match up with the way in which they walk. And you must do the same.

What type of walker are you?

To establish this natural tempo you first have to identify what kind of walker you are. No two individuals walk exactly the same way - so no two swings are the same! There are two distinct types of walking style: there are those who start by the upper body and the others who starts from feet. You have to identify your preference. Talk to your teaching Pro, find out where your true motion originates. That will provide you with the key to developing your Natural Golf Swing. If you are someone who initiates motion with the feet, my advice is to start your swing with your feet and let your top half respond to their movement; if you are upper body dominant, you are going to be better off starting your golf swing with the hips and shoulders - your lower body will adjust to its own pace. In both cases your arms should react to body motion and the overall tempo should reflect your walking rhythm.



For your information, both Philip Golding and I are top half walkers, so our foot and leg action responds to the motion of our upper body. To facilitate this we allow our feet to move freely as required - we are not rooted to the ground!

Appreciate Triangulaid's 3 Phases

THE 'SPORT', THE 'GAME', THE 'BUSINESS'

The Triangulaid teaching philosophy was pioneered by Welshman Bill Owens in 1991 and is aimed predominantly at helping higher handicap players to learn a more natural golf swing. Owens broke the challenge into three distinct areas: the 'Sport' (long irons, hybrids and woods), the 'Game' (5-iron to Pitching Wedge) and the 'Business' (all aspects of the short game). And it was Owens' assertion that a truly natural golf swing is only possible for a full swing using between a 5-iron and wedge - Triangulaid's favourite area that Owens called 'The Game'. A golfer requires no exceptional physical force to carry the ball through the air with these clubs - the emphasis is on making a natural swing, encouraging the true kinetic chain of motion to unfold with special attention paid to the finish. This is where the Triangle you see here really helps a higher-handicap player - as I will explain fully over the course of this article.

'The Sport' element of the game - the longer irons, hybrids and woods - cannot be made with the same 100% natural swing. It is a more physically demanding area of the

game, the emphasis here being on the way you adjust your address position in order to make the longer swing that controls these clubs. I will cover those adjustments in a future issue, along with Triangulaid concepts surrounding the 'Business', the organisation, focus and discipline required in the short game. This is where tour players win tournaments and amateurs can drastically improve their score.

For the time being, however, I want to focus on the unique teaching concept of Triangulaid, designed specifically to help the amateur appreciate - and feel - the correct inside path back to the ball keep their Natural Golf Swing on the course.



The technical benchmarks for a Natural Golf Swing: 1. The Grip

"I never met any golfer better than their grip"

BEN HOGAN

To make full use of the power of your club you must create a series of movements that enable you to transfer the energy of your body down through the shaft and into the clubhead. The grip holds the key: the more your grip is technically perfect the more your swing will be natural and your ball-flight consistent and accurate. Based on Triangulaid philosophy, here are seven steps to follow for a good grip (oh, and my advice until you get to step 7 is to check the position of the clubface, not your hands!)

1. To make your grip, hold the club up at a 45-degree angle, as you see here. Place it in front of your eyes, the leading edge of the club vertical

2. From 5-iron to PW, the angle formed at the back of the left hand (right hand for lefties) should reflect the angle of the clubface. In other words, the left hand position is seen to change gradually from 5-iron to PW as the loft increases

3. The position of the left thumb and index finger match on the grip - they are the same height. Neither protrudes beyond the other. Note that the left thumb is placed fractionally to the right side of the handle (as you see it)

4. Balance the club between the hooked left index finger and the heel pad at the back of the left hand (first right); the grip should not run through the lifeline in the middle of the hand (except in putting!)

5. In bringing the right hand to join the left, take the club in the 2nd finger of the hand as it curls under the shaft and hide the left thumb beneath the fleshy pad at the base of the right thumb

6. Check that your right thumb/index finger forms a V that points in the direction of the chin (not the shoulder). The two fingers are not touching, they grip the club!

7. Make sure the leading edge of the clubface is always vertical. You can watch your hands. Make sure that the six previous steps have been met. If not, try again!



Don't place the clubhead on the ground to make your grip - hold it up at a 45-degree angle and check the leading edge is vertical before placing your left hand on the club. It should be possible to balance the club thus (above)



Checkpoints to follow...

As you see in these comparative examples of a 5-iron and a PW at the top of the page opposite, the position of the left hand is very different. A pitching wedge has a loft of around 47 degrees, while a 5-iron is around 27 degrees, and this is reflected in the position of the left hand/wrist. With the PW, the angle of the left hand is very strong, with at least three (even four) knuckles visible; in the case of the 5-iron, there is less angle with the left hand, and perhaps two and a half knuckles visible.

You may find that it's easier at first to make your grip with your hand down the shaft nearer to the clubhead. This will help you to view the angle of the face and match it with the back of your left hand (as you see illustrated here).

Also, once you have completed your grip, think about the so-called 'trigger' position of the right thumb and forefinger - just as if you were pulling the trigger on a gun!

Let me stress, these adjustments to the left hand grip apply in what is referred to in Triangulaid terms as 'The Game', shots from 5-iron to PW that are not reliant on physical force. When it comes to 'The Sport' - i.e. the long game shots from 4-iron to driver - the grip should be consistent and the recommendation is that you use the same left hand position as you do for the 7-iron, a strong position with three knuckles visible on the back of the hand.

Does adjusting the left hand grip seem strange? Not to Monty!

In 2000 I was fortunate to attend a clinic with Colin Montgomerie during the French Open in Paris. Thanks to my familiarity with Triangulaid methods I detected that Monty adjusted his left hand grip along the lines I have just explained - i.e. he appeared to strengthen his grip progressively with each drop in loft, working down through the irons. I was bold enough to ask him about this aspect of his grip and pointed out that he made this adjustment between the 5-iron and PW - 'How do you know that?' he asked me, clearly taken aback that I had made this observation. I explained to Monty that I was a student of Bill Owens' Triangulaid method and that making the grip in this fashion was a key element of it.

Shortly after our meeting, Monty and Bill had a discussion about the grip, sharing their views on the merits of this system. It just goes to show that the 'textbook' way of doing things we are taught to follow does not always reflect the practicality of the natural game. You have to keep your mind open to new ideas!



Your grip on a Natural Golf Swing

The 'trigger' position of the right thumb and forefinger adds the finishing touch to your grip - and is a great source of feel and power. Check that this 'V' on the right hand runs up toward your club, not the right shoulder.

Note: the adjustments to the position of the left hand that I am referring to on this ground are designed for 'The Game', i.e. the approach shots to the green from 5-iron to PW. On all longer clubs, from the 4-iron to the driver - the 'Sport' - the recommendation is that you use the same grip as that for the 7-iron, with three knuckles showing on the back of the left hand. More about that in a future issue of Golf International



The technical benchmarks for a Natural Golf Swing: 2. The Triangle

Triangulaid
For the beginner...

Here I am clearly suggesting everything – and this is a wonderful way to find experience Triangulaid for the higher handicap player. The key is to play with gravity. Opening the triangle to around 40 degrees provides a wide margin for error, the feet and lower body open to the target line while the shoulders are square to it. The arms are encouraged to hang freely and they then follow the body motion, swinging from inside to outside. The weight of the clubhead feels so heavy in my hands that I have the sensation it is the last thing to move as I initiate the motion. This creates a 'lag' in the backswing which can be seen to increase during the downswing. For the time being it doesn't matter that the clubhead crosses the target line at the top – let it swing freely. (Look for the shaft orientation to be parallel to the red path – this is a good benchmark for a beginner.) During the transition I focus on turning my hips along the white path (the lower body line to the left of target), while my shoulders and arms follow the red path. The key is that I unwind in the true kinematic sequence, from the ground up. The ball will fly with right-to-left draw and land between the triangle lines.



Lower body is open, shoulders parallel with the target line



Arms respond to body motion, the clubhead being the last thing to move, reacting to the body



Let the club swing freely across the target line, left arm relaxed. This is fine for a beginner – go out and look for this position



The open lower body now really benefits your motion as you unwind from the ground up – the true kinematic sequence



Feel the clubhead wrap over the ball as you release the club through impact. The momentum of the swing will take you to a full finish – and remember to hold the position for 7 seconds



Opening up the Triangle is the secret to help the beginner gain some confidence with his swing. The key is that while the feet and hips are positioned on a line that is open to the target (the inner rail), the shoulders are square to the target line (thin rail); the red side of the triangle represents the path of the clubhead in the downswing.

Note: The ball position is such that you can achieve the correct ball-tee contact

Key Set-Up Points

BEGINNER

- * Feet and lower body aligned to the left of the target – i.e. 'open'
- * The shoulders are aimed square with the ball-to-target line and the clubface is aimed at the target
- * The more the Triangle is open, the more the ball position should be moved back in the stance. In this case it is opposite my right foot
- * With the arms hanging freely, the hands are just inside the ball lines

Triangulaid
A triangle that helps...

If the grip is correct, the natural shape of shot will be right to left – i.e. a draw – for right-handed players (and vice versa). My intention now is to share with you the principle of the method Triangulaid in order that you understand the ideas behind the system of lines in the triangle and the way it works.

First step: understanding the 'natural effect' – the draw

In order to propel a ball a long way and in the right direction the golf ball has to spin in a certain manner. Suffice to say the ball is designed in such a way that when it is struck correctly there is a spin profile that optimises its flight and trajectory. To all intents and purposes a perfectly straight ball flight does not exist – no tour player will tell you he visualises a dead-straight flight. He practises to control a natural shape, a 'stoked shot' that he can trust on the course.

By wrapping his boot around the ball and releasing his energy in a specific fashion, the footballer curls the shot from right-to-left. That's a natural motion for a right-footed player...and the same principle is true in golf. The clubhead will tend to open up during the backswing and to close in the downswing, the clubface turning over the ball and creating that right-to-left spin.

Second step: parallel lines don't exist!

(The brain understands parallel, but the eyes converge) It seems logical, then, to think that a right-handed golfer should have a right-to-left ball flight. And yet, for the higher handicap player, by far the biggest problem in golf is the left-to-right flight – i.e. they slice the ball.

Why is this? Because of the consequences of parallel lines and the effect those lines have on your brain and your swing.

No one would argue with the fact that 'text-book' alignment sees the feet, hips and shoulders

parallel to the target line for a full swing. Pros spend a lot of time fine-tuning these details – and they have the skill and athleticism to accommodate 'square' alignment and rotate their body at speed to 'get out of their own way' and create the room to return the clubface along the desired inside path.

For most amateurs this remains a problem. The vast majority of club players do not have this athletic ability to rotate and get out of their own way for impact. What's more, while the brain understands that parallel alignment means aiming the body left of the target, the eyes converge and play tricks on the mind. The result is that the vast majority of golfers are mis-aligned at the set-up, typically aiming their body to the right of target.

It is this mis-alignment that deceives the brain and causes so many problems with the golf swing. I see so many amateurs who display a tendency to swing from out-to-in (the classic slicing action) and this is largely attributable to the fact that, while they believe they are correctly aimed, they are in fact aiming to the right and trying to make amends with a swing that is subconsciously trying to pull the ball back to the target – compensations that can never be consistent.

Triangular lines: a logical alternative that helps you to play within a margin of error Triangulaid was developed specifically to help higher-handicap golfers eliminate thoughts of the target and offers a simple solution. Using the lines to offset your alignment, you effectively preset a good lower body action in the downswing and thus enjoy the true kinematic sequence (i.e. unwinding from the ground up) as you unwind and release the club through the ball.

Remember, the arms react to the movement of the feet (the natural walking motion I talked about). The inner line represents the alignment of the lower body at the set-up (the shoulders square to the target), and the red line pointing to the right represents the path of the clubhead (running inside the target line). The beauty of the Triangle is that the angle can be adjusted to define the margin for error you need, depending on your level. As long as your grip is correct, you will fall in the space predetermined by your Triangle.



These images reveal perfectly the way in which using the triangle enables a golfer to experience swinging the club on the inside path approaching the ball. Aligning the feet and hips open to the target line gives the body a head start on the way back to the ball – and thus clears the way for the arms to fall into this letting position



"The objective is to swing the clubhead in orientation with the red path on the downswing – feel the inside path of a Natural Golf Swing"



You will notice here that Philip has narrowed the Triangle considerably, to reflect the margin for error we would expect of a better player. I am adjusting his shoulder alignment, making sure they are square with his target line, which they must be at the set-up.

The tendency is to aim the body to the right of the target, even for a tour player. So the key here is to aim the lower body fractionally left to compensate and then exaggerate the feeling. The lines give you a benchmark, shoulders to the target line, feet to the left of it, to prepare for the true kinematic sequence.

Note also that as the better player closes the Triangle, so the ball position moves forward and the tilt of the shaft is reduced

The Universal Triangle

A margin of error adapted to your level right now

On the previous pages I have demonstrated the 'large' setting of the Triangle that would be suitable for beginners; here, with Philip's help, we are looking at a smaller, 'closed' Triangle that is applied to the expert. Somewhere between the two extremes lies your position of truth!

In my Academies in France, I help a beginner by introducing the large triangle - the widest margin for error - and gradually decrease it as we progress. The goal is to be free from psychological coercion and to maintain a natural swinging motion (which is why thinking about parallel lines is not going to help!).

The key to accelerated learning? Make it EASY and NATURAL

If you find yourself intrigued by the Triangulaid method, search youtube.com for clips of me teaching in Paris - the rate at which total beginners learn to hit good golfshots is quite incredible, and that's a testament to the concept Bill Owens devised over 20 years ago.

Of course, you can create your own triangle using three clubs laid on the ground. A higher handicap golfer would set the lines as much as 45 degrees open in relation to one another, as you saw me demonstrating on the previous pages, opening up the lower body while encouraging the arms to swing on a severely inside path. The relative alignment of the lower body to the shoulders gives you a headstart in the downswing and enables you to clear the lower body out of the way in readiness for impact.

Clearly, a talented player doesn't need so

much of a headstart. Tour player Philip Golding - a former French Open champion - would narrow the triangle almost to nothing (although, as you see here, he enjoys practising with the Triangle set with a small angle to encourage the correct motion through the transition and also to raise his awareness of the inside path to impact).

It also helps him to have a better set-up. In the years we have been working together we have noticed a tendency for him to set up to the ball with his hips and shoulders slightly closed in relation to the target. The small Triangle gives him good benchmark to align his body correctly and also eliminate thinking too much about the target by playing within a (small) margin of error.

Create motion with true kinematic sequence

Above all, practising in this fashion helps him to respect the true kinematic sequence, unwinding from the ground up - feet, knees, hips, shoulders, arms and finally clubhead.

Gradually, as the quality of a player's swing improves, we would expect the angle of the triangle to narrow to reflect the fact that the body is winding and unwinding much more effectively and the ball striking is more consistent. But of course, in doing this, we are lessening the margin for error. Your challenge is to go out and discover your own 'level', and set the Triangle to the angle that suits your skills.

I am sure you can begin to appreciate that it is more difficult (and technical) to play with a small margin of error... most golfers don't have the time to make this a realistic goal.



"I have been working with Stephane since 2010 and have found the new thinking he brings to the game to be refreshing. The Triangulaid tool has also given me a better understanding and awareness of my set-up and the path of my swing and I use it regularly whenever I practise. The 'walking in' drill has also helped tremendously with my rhythm, and has given me more freedom in my swing. Thanks to Stephane, I am much more creative in my practice, hitting balls without looking at the ball and practising in bare feet. Coaching in golf tends to be uniform - and a lot of people are wary of new and different ideas. But the big question is this: how much has your game improved in recent years? If it hasn't, then maybe it's time to take a fresh approach."

PHILIP GOLDING



With the triangle closed, the feet and lower body are now only fractionally open; the shoulders, meanwhile, are square to the target line



Leading edge and the left arm are parallel at the top of the backswing



Arm movement in the downswing is nothing but the consequence to the rotational movement of the body, which places the club in the right position before impact



The ball flight starts to the right of the target line with a nice draw to finish right in the middle of the Triangle

The technical benchmarks for a Natural Golf Swing: 3. Rotation & Support



Natural rotation and motion is restricted if you insist on keeping your feet flat on the ground.

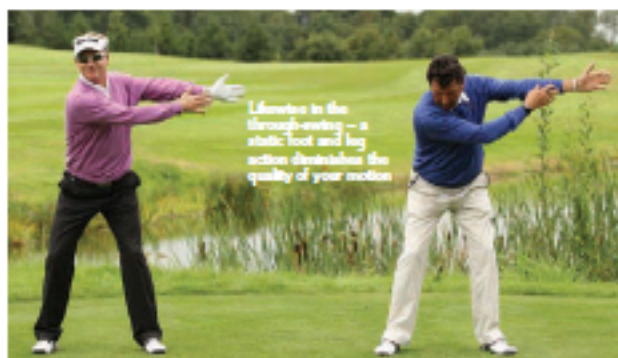


All it takes is a little footwork to rotate the hips freely and enjoy a full rotation of the upper body.

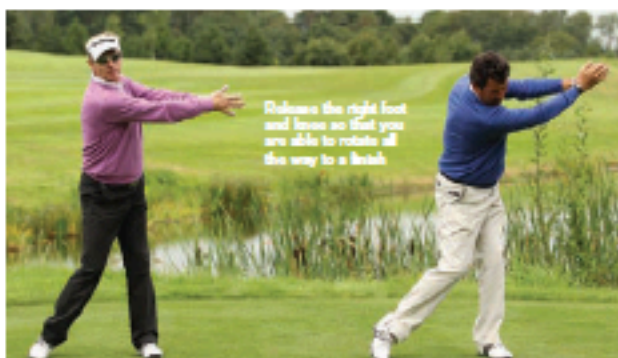
Understand rotation and not simply arm movement!

Do you turn and swing or simply move your arm? A poor lower body action can make the difference between a good swing and a poor arm movement, as this drill demonstrates. Stand up straight (like Phil) or take you 5-iron posture (like me). From there, stretch your right arm horizontally and then try to touch the palms of your hands together.

Unless you are extremely supple, this is simply not possible without raising the left heel and encouraging good movement in the lower body. You need that hip rotation to turn fully onto a well-supported right side. Same in the follow-through; if you want to turn and shift your weight correctly, it is important that you mobilize the hips, knees and feet. Try it this weekend.



Liberation in the through-swing — a static foot and leg action diminishes the quality of your motion.



Release the right foot and knee so that you are able to rotate all the way to a finish.

Enhance sensations in your toes...

Finally, let me leave you with a great drill for natural motion - hitting balls with your shoes and socks off. Get in tune with your natural swing rhythm as you feel the ground through your feet.

I'm fascinated to see how many tour players are now wearing soft shoes - Fred Couples, Ernie, Tiger Woods, Justin Rose. The key is that these shoes promise exceptional feel through the feet and into the ground - which is what you want for a Natural Golf Swing.

I hope you have enjoyed this introduction to the coaching methods of Triangulaid. Believe me, it works. Use the exercises that appeared in the last issue (the walk-in drill, hitting without looking at the ball, 'I am the ball' holding the finish, along with the Triangle) and you will soon enjoy playing your best golf with your Natural Golf Swing. Enjoy!



Too bare minimalist swinging and letting balls with your shoes and socks off can help to get you in touch with a more natural motion.

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