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INSTRUCTION

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Out of the Trap
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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

- 110** 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 Golding has been working on the principles of Triangulaid for the last two seasons and in 2011 recorded victories in the Paris Open and Belfort Classic...)

- 60** 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 GI's Jonathan Yarwood
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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
- 152** 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



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 ball) 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 angle, 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
PGA MEMBER / TITLEIST PERFORMANCE INSTITUTE CERTIFIED
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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 Manacero, 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 Welchman Bill Ovens in 1991 and is aimed predominantly at helping higher handicap players to learn a more natural golf swing. Ovens 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 Ovens's 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 Ovens 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 (rest 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!



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!



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. The create 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.



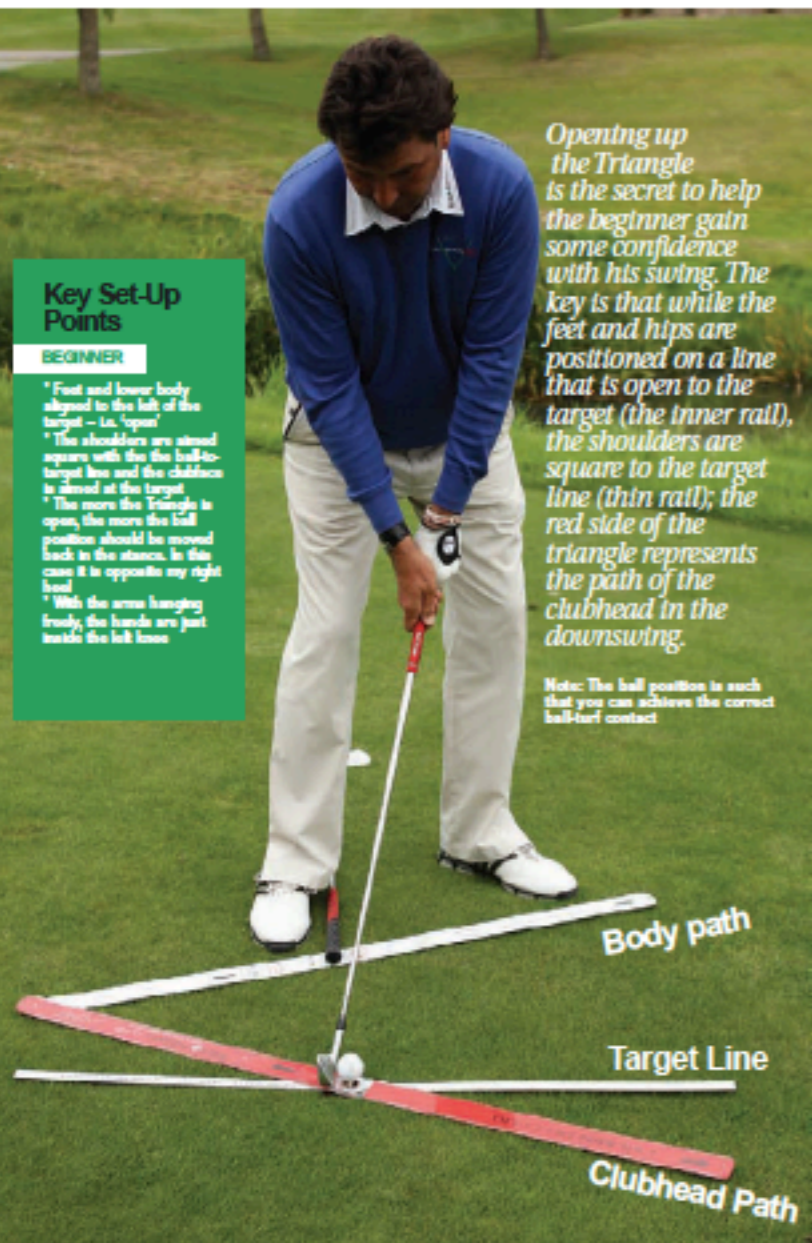
Opening up the Triangle is the secret to help the beginner gain some confidence with his swing. The key is that while the feet and hips are positioned on a line that is open to the target (the inner rail), the shoulders are square to the target line (thin rail); the red side of the triangle represents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

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 optimizes 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 'stook 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 consequence 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

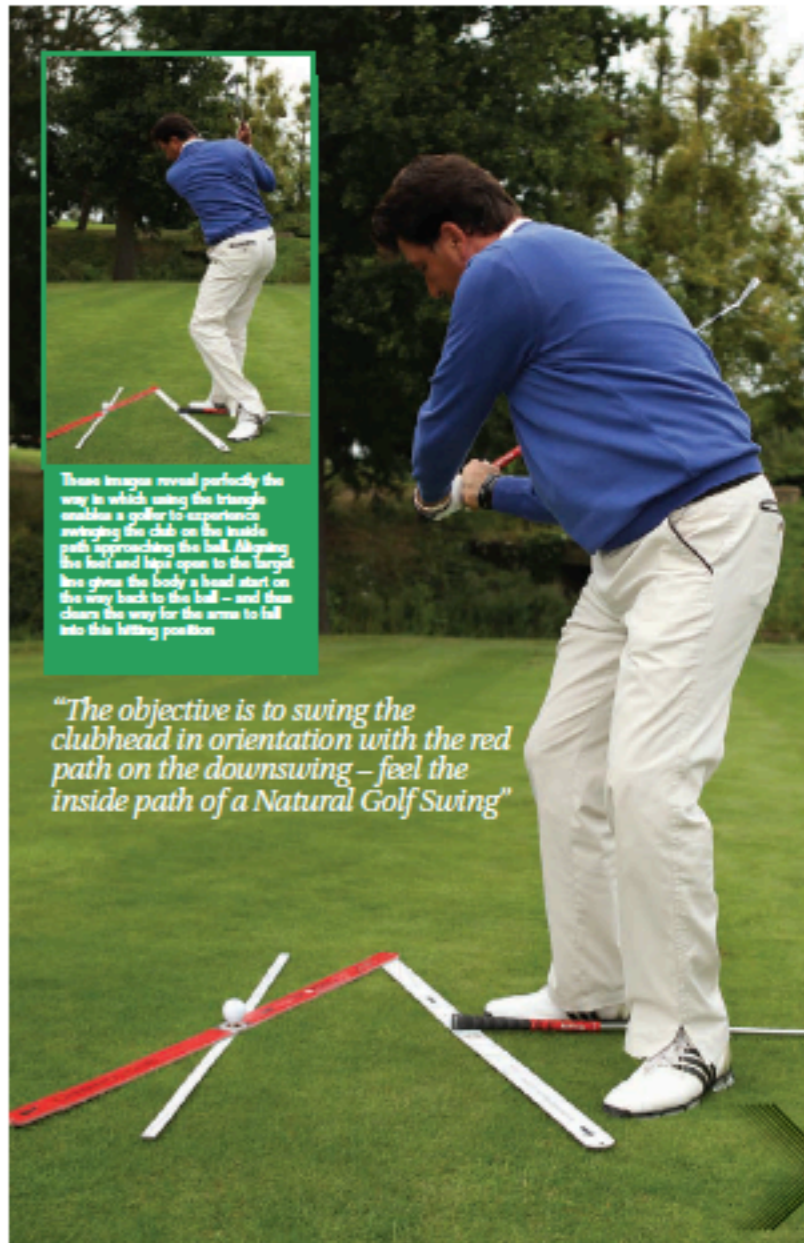
parallel to the target line for a full swing. Pros spend a lot of time fine-tuning these details - and they have the skill and athleticism to accommodate 'square' alignment and rotate their body at speed to 'get out of their own way' and create the room to return the clubface along the desired inside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

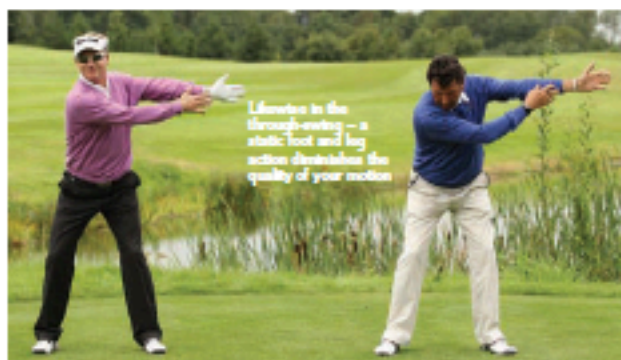


All it takes is a little footwork to rotate the hips freely and enjoy a full rotation of the upper body.

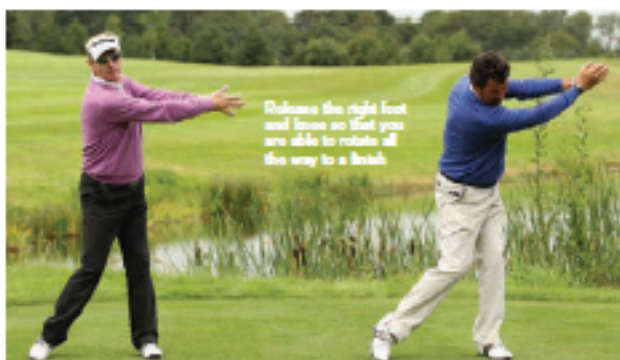
Understand rotation and not simply arm movement!

Do you turn and swing or simply move your arms? 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 S-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.



Liftation 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!



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

Stéphane Bachoz/ PGA France
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