

The hit part 1



Peter Croker

AS pictured above, it would be a workable analogy to regard the clubhead as rocket driven and your body as the launch pad. You throw the clubhead down, out and through the ball to a full finish using your body as a base to release down, out and away from. The hips and shoulders will respond to this throwing action by the hands and add power and control to support this "hand action" for all shots from chip to pitch to full swing. This is a viewpoint we will be building on when working through the exercises in the lessons that follow.



The Hit Exercises

In the golf swing you want 'Clubhead Awareness' not 'Hand Awareness'. But, since your hands are the Source of Motion for your golf swing, it is the means through which you will learn to reliably hit that ball. Educated hands will be needed to develop clubhead awareness and control.

Learning how to hit a golf ball will now be accomplished through a few exercises. Each exercise is designed for you to learn something and build on what was learned in the previous exercise(s). It may take some a bit longer and some shorter, but with honest work, at the completion of these exercises you will know how to effortlessly hit a golf ball long and straight.

The 4 Hit Exercises for this lesson

- 1) Power Exercise**
(How to generate Power in the golf swing)
- 2) Accuracy Exercise**
(How to guarantee Accuracy in the golf swing)
- 3) Power & Accuracy Impact Push Exercise**
(How to apply Power & Accuracy in the golf swing at impact)
- 4) Impact Exercise**
(Defining and drilling in the impact area of the full swing)

1) Power Exercise

Purpose: To show you how to generate power in the golf swing.

Take a golf club and stand opposite another person. Hold the club about chest high:

- Place the clubhead against the chest of the person standing sideways to you and push to the left. Not much power there.
- Place the clubhead pointing directly in front of you against the chest of a person facing you. Have some bend in your arms. Now push forward on the club. Some real power there, and you could do some real damage.

This is to demonstrate the all important principle that for power in golf, you must push out down the clubshaft. Your hands, by pushing out down the clubshaft, push the clubhead.



A) hit the ball to the left and C) hit the ball to the right. Picture (B) would demonstrate a straight hit.

- Assume position (B) and Pull the club back into position (A).
- Assume position (B) and Pull the club forward into position (C).
- Assume position (A) and then Push the club into a straight line with your left arm, position (B).
- Assume position (C) and then Push the club into a straight line with your left arm, position (B).

The above 4 examples are to demonstrate how the club will push straight, for an accurate shot.



3) Impact Push - Power & Accuracy Exercise

Purpose: To give you the feeling for how to apply Power & Accuracy at Impact.

Taking a club, set up with the clubhead a few inches behind the ball position and get someone to hold firmly onto the clubhead. If necessary, move your hands back a bit (but not behind the clubhead) and really get the feeling your hands are behind the clubhead. Then, pushing out down and against the clubshaft, push the clubhead through impact.

2) Accuracy Exercise

Purpose: To show how to generate accuracy in the golf swing.

It is interesting that what guarantees power is also what guarantees accuracy in the golf swing. Just after impact you want your left arm to be in line with the clubshaft (Picture B). Pictures (A) & (C) demonstrate impact positions that would cause you to

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This is a short exercise but absolutely essential that the golfer get it exactly right before continuing on. It is the precisely completing of this exercise, that will lay in the foundation for success in the Impact (Gradient) exercise.



4) Impact (Gradient Exercise)

Purpose: To get comfortable with and learn how to execute the impact part of the golf swing flawlessly.

Action Definition of Impact

The clubhead stays on the ball less than one thousandth of a second, but it is unworkable to regard impact as merely this small instant. This results in golfers hitting 'at' the ball and not 'through' the ball. This produces glancing blows and not compressing the ball.

The only really workable viewpoint is to regard impact as the point from when the ball is first contacted until Follow Through. Instead of hitting at the ball, this will result in you hitting through the ball.

It is interesting that what happens after the ball has been struck determines how it will have been struck. If you do not hit through to Follow Through, you will have not first contacted the ball solidly. This is a highly workable viewpoint and the defining of impact follows.

In order to make the above an 'Action Definition', the word Impact is further defined

through a brief exercise so that you can get the proper feeling of it.

Drill this in until it becomes second nature. This is what you are doing and how you feel through impact in all of your shots:

With a 3 iron (or least lofted club), set up to a ball at address and place the clubhead directly against the back of the ball. Your left arm is straight and the right arm is slightly bent with the elbows pointing down at your hips. Your right shoulder is slightly lower than your left (for right handed golfers). Place all your weight solidly on both feet. The action of your hands uncocking (thumbs pointing downward) and pushing the clubhead down, out and through the ball will turn the left hip and the weight will move towards the left heel while the right foot remains planted and heavy in the ground. You will feel the full extension of both arms as the clubhead moves deep down and out away from your right shoulder and your steady head. The shoulders remain square and parallel to the target line at this stage of the drill. This expansion through the ball here helps produce the compression on the ball and is defined as the "Impact Zone."

Your left shoulder is not turning with the shot at this stage. You are attempting to push the ball to the right of the target line. Start very slow, and gradually build up the speed at which you can drive the ball forward. You are attempting to keep the ball against the clubface for as long as possible. The club shaft will move fully into line with the left

arm and remain in line with the left arm as you extend deep into impact and beyond. As you move further into "Follow Through" the club shaft remains fully in line with the left arm and the shoulders turn, releasing the right foot out of the ground and up on the toe. The right knee and hip also move as you come up to balance on your left side. The right knee moves in to touch the left as the left leg fully straightens. You will extend deep into Follow Through.

This exercise will help get you through the shot from pitch to full swing and is well worth the effort to get it right as it helps build a positive hit, more control, and consistency.

You are trying to do something that will never happen.

You are trying to Push the ball to the right of the target line. The club has a 'hook face' designed into it that will cause your attempt to push the ball to the right, to result in the ball going dead straight - so long as you push into Follow Through.

Work with the above until you really gain a feeling for impact.

Impact (Gradient) Exercise

You can learn anything if you break it down into small enough pieces, where you move at your own pace and gradually acquire personal certainty in the action of hitting a golf ball.

When you work with a short stroke, the impact action is just as it is with a full swing. Once you learn how and get comfortable with the hitting



action around impact, your entire stroke becomes far easier to learn and it becomes far easier to drill in consistency with a full swing.

A full swing is just a bunch of activity tacked onto this exact action, with the aim of making this action more powerful. But it is still the same simple action. Remember and apply precisely the 'Action Definition' of impact from the start of this step.

No matter what the length the swing is, you must accelerate through that ball - never decelerate. Begin this exercise with a Pitching Wedge. When you have completed steps A & B - move on to a 9 iron and move through the same steps. In this way, continue on with your 8, 7 and 6 irons:

A) Hit a ball 3 yards (distance in the air).

B) Gradually increase the distance you hit the ball until your backswing will go back as far as to where your right forearm is parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing.

Get so you can reliably execute impact in this exercise and you will gain a feeling for impact, to build a full swing around! ◀

Peter Croker has been a PGA member since 1971 and has given lessons with his Croker Golf System to professionals including Vijay Singh, Arnold Palmer, Roco Mediate, Fred Funk, Olin Browne, and Bob Charles. Based at The Dunes Golf Links, he also runs a unique online golf academy: www.crokergolfsystem.com
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