

A new, Australian move promises solid contact,
a cure for your slice, instant results and
less strain on your back. Is this your
SWING OF THE FUTURE?

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What you are about to read may revolutionize the way you swing a golf club. Before we peer into the future, however, let's briefly look at the recent past. Modern-day instruction has taught two keys to the downswing:

1. Make a conscious move to transfer your weight.
2. Don't "hit from the top." In other words, try to retain an acute angle between the clubshaft and your left arm as long as possible so you can "hit late."

In our approach to teaching the swing, it is imperative that you do the exact opposite:

1. Don't make any conscious move to transfer your weight on the downswing.
2. Try to "hit from the top." That is, try to push or throw the clubhead through the ball.

Although it sounds unorthodox, this program produces a very orthodox-looking golf swing. You are freed up to just hit that ball.

The program, titled Natural Golf Schools International, was developed by a team of professionals working with all levels of golfers over a two-year period. It is designed around a number of drills you can do for the most part at home. These exercises groove your natural reaction into something that is effective when hitting a golf ball. It is also easier on your back.

Instructors and players have debated various points about the golf swing, but almost universally they have regarded the downswing as a pulling action. Transfer your weight, turn your shoulders, turn/slide your hips, pull down the butt end of the club. Pull, pull, pull. In our opinion, therein lies the main reason golfers have not gotten better over the years. Instead, we teach that the swing should be regarded as a pushing action. By concentrating on pushing, you are better harnessing what you can do to cause your natural swing to work effectively.

What is Pulling?

Pulling is when the force is between the object and where it is to go. For example if you were towing a heavy iron ball along the ground with a chain, your body would need to be ahead of the object. An orientation toward pulling the clubhead with your body and bigger muscles actively leading the way (toward the target) on the downswing, causes you to lose touch with the clubhead on the way down. That's called "downswing blackout," and results in a swing that is difficult to time through the hitting area.

The Cause of A True Late Hit.

What is pushing ?

Pushing is when the object is between the force and where it is to go. It is a steady pressure against an object to move it away from you. For example, say you were pushing a car that's stuck in the snow. You would place your hands on the back bumper and without a chain push the car from behind, maintaining contact with the car. This is the Natural Golf orientation. Pushing the clubhead with your hands and arms away from your body through the ball keeps you in touch with the clubhead and gives you a more powerful and deliberate hit. Think of it as if you are pushing all of the energy out of you, down the clubshaft and into the ball.

In trying to achieve this ...

When you view golf as a pulling action you get caught up in studying the effects and lose the causes that will produce a natural swing. For example, many respected teachers talk about retaining the angle between the shaft and the left arm for as long as possible into the hitting area. They maintain this effort leads to greater power and try to prevent the most feared phenomenon, "clubhead throwaway" a loss of this angle too early in the downswing. However, retaining this angle is not a cause. It's an effect that can be downright heavenly.

... you often get this

It is interesting to see what happens to someone who begins to resist or avoid having something happen. Trying to create the "late hit" by leading

with the body, hands or arms in a pulling motion (with the butt of the club coming down first) often causes the body to get out ahead of the clubhead at impact. We call this "getting ahead of the hit."

Hence, there is no body weight behind the hit, where you need it most. Any late-hit angle is less effective and clubhead throwaway is the result if you are to hit the ball at all.

**Instead,
throw the clubhead
through the 'finish
line'**



Conversely, we contend that any late-hit angle is simply the effect of trying to get rid of that late-hit angle. By attempting to "throw" or push the clubhead first, directly into and through that ball, the faster (more aggressively) you accelerate the clubhead and the greater the effective weight you are forced to move. To do so requires the responsive, bigger muscles of the arms to act first, which brings the right elbow down in front of the right hip and close to the body before the hands and wrists can release the clubhead-therefore the true late hit.

This may sound radical to you, but you will generate more clubhead speed, and the club will actually stay on the correct path more easily, if you keep your body passive and try to throw the clubhead at the ball from the top of your swing as early as possible with your hands. Feel as if that's your first move down. Think of the ball as the finish line to a race and your clubhead is your speeding car. If it's a tight race, you don't just coast in. You floor the pedal. It will feel like you are releasing early in your downswing, but in actuality the angle between the club-shaft and your left arm will be retained late into the downswing. The result will be a pushing action with your hands extending the clubhead deep into the shot on the way to a full finish, up and over the left shoulder.

It's like using a hammer

Pick up a hammer and pound a nail as hard as you can. Were you concerned about the "late-hit angle"? Of course not. In fact, the harder you hit the nail with the hammer-trying without tension to get rid of the hammer-head onto the back of the nail- the greater the angle and the later it was retained between the hammer's shaft and your arm.

Another example: If you were to hold a flagstick and accelerate it quickly in any one direction, the tendency is for the stick to bend (lag) and your wrists to give (bend back) under the pressure. The same principle causes a late hit in a golf shot.

How to Achieve True Power.

Think of using a sledgehammer

Let's look at the action of hammering again. As you hammer, are you pushing or pulling the hammer's head into the back of the nail? The nail is between you and where you want it to go, so that requires a pushing orientation. With a sledgehammer you would try to push the head directly into whatever you are hitting, allowing the weight of the head to help you generate power. This is similar to hitting a golf ball. Even the phrases, "hammering a big drive" or "you nailed that one," are analogous. Though you have turned sideways, it is still the familiar hammering action. Any weight transfer, your elbow staying in on the way down, your hips turning, are all effects, not causes. They are effects of how you hold the sledgehammer (or the club), and how you make it hit the object (or the ball) with your hands.

An exercise to feel power



To feel the swing as a pushing action, set up at address with the clubhead against a solid object, like a wall. Push the clubhead against the wall and feel how this pushing is out from and against each of these body parts: head, left shoulder, right shoulder, left hip, right hip, left knee, right knee, left foot, right foot. Now take some practice swings pushing the clubhead through the ball and away from your entire body. Acquire this feeling for all your future shots.

The Source of Power

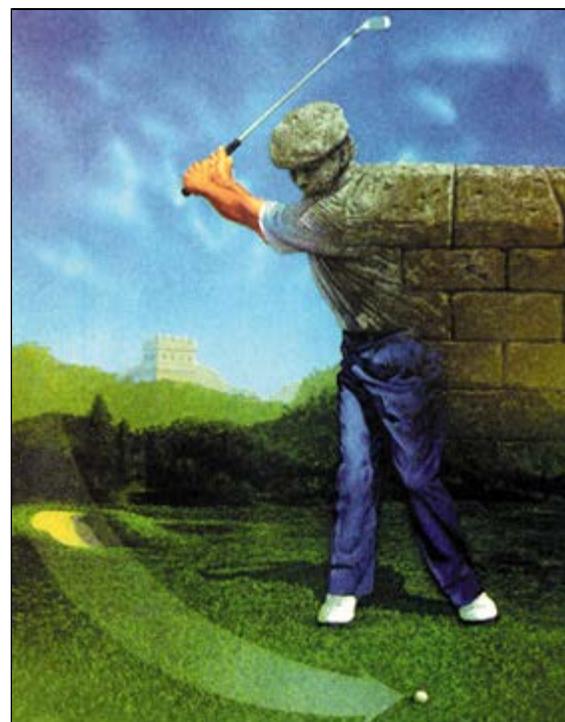
Hitting against delayed body

Power is derived from having a position you can maintain. If you can't hold your position in a debate, you will lose the argument. Look at large electric generators: It is the huge bolts securing the base to the ground that give the armature something to turn against and hence generate power. If you tried to push a refrigerator and were on roller skates, how much power do you think you could generate?

Coming into the ball, you should feel that your body makes no motion forward but only provides something to push against and out from. Think of your upper body as part of a brick wall, held in place with mortar. The true cause of a delayed body is pushing (throwing) the clubhead first, directly down and out at the ball.

When your body convulsively takes off on its own in the swing, not as dictated to by the hands, all your timing and power is gone as the swing becomes an uncontrolled blur.

Instead, feel as if you are hitting with your hands against a base (your body), which is quiet and delayed in any movement toward the target. Your body will move in behind the push (throw) and be there when you need its force at impact.



Reduce stress on your back

If your lower body is oriented toward pulling on the clubhead, your spine gets caught in the middle with severe twisting and unnecessary pressures. Golf is a game for life, your entire life. Back stress tends to be cumulative over a lifetime. A pushing orientation does not depend upon the lower body driving forward against the upper body. Pushing is against the entire body and a straight spine. This method is designed to reduce stress on your spine. Actually, many golfers who could not play golf anymore because of back and shoulder injury may be able to play with this method.



A word about timing

Timing is the precise sequencing required to make the different parts of a golf stroke work together for a successful result.

As an effect: Because of an initial pulling orientation, hitting a golf ball can become a very difficult action. It is one thing to hit balls at a driving range and get some timing going with a pulling stroke. It is another thing again to try to find that timing out on the course. Pulling produces a one-two hit of the ball. Pull on the clubhead and then it snaps through. The ball isn't even moving and golfers find themselves needing better timing than in sports where they have to hit a moving ball. As a cause: Similar to hammering, hitting a golf ball with a pushing orientation very much reduces the role of timing. You are just trying to push the clubhead into the back of that ball as quickly as possible. This action is done against your whole body. The lack of timing required for the entire action is a relief for any student and makes this technique surprisingly easy.

3 Drills for Power

Drill 1: Hear the swoosh



Stand as if at address with a clubshaft (no clubhead) in your right hand (use a shaft with a grip if possible for safety). If you don't have a shaft, grip the hosel end of a regular club.

Raise your left arm directly in front of you parallel to the ground and swing the end of the shaft as fast as you can. Listen for the "swoosh." Your body stays back and your shoulders stay square to the target line until after the follow-through (past impact), then your body is carried forward by the momentum of your right hand and arm to a full face-the-target finish.

There are three stages to this motion: (1) Swoosh, (2) a pause at the end of the swoosh and (3) the momentum of the swoosh carrying the body to the finish.

Notice from the sound of the "swoosh" the incredible amount of clubhead speed that can be generated using just one hand. This is an extremely important exercise that will get your body moving correctly as dictated to by your hands.

Work with this exercise until you groove in the feeling of No. 1, then No. 2, then No. 3. Remember: In No. 1 you are pushing against and away from a quiet body.

The correct way to uncock your wrists

To remove any illusions as to how the hands should direct the clubhead and body for power, uncock your hands under (not over) from the top of

the swing (far left). In other words, your hands should work down in such a manner that the clubhead approaches the ball from the inside. You are pushing the clubhead directly at the ball. Work with both types of cocking so you know right from wrong. Uncocking under has a distinct feeling.

Uncocking under - yes

Uncocking over - no

Drill No. 2: Uncock slowly

Now, still with a club, freeze your body at the top-of-the-backswing position and do not let it move. Slowly uncock your hands under, pushing the clubhead directly at the ball. Because you are pushing down the clubshaft, your hands will automatically uncock correctly through impact. Drill this into your muscle memory, swinging slowly at first, gradually gaining clubhead speed with each repetition.



Drill 3: Break the barrier

Part 1: Without a club, freeze your body at the top of the backswing position. Do not allow your body to move at all throughout this exercise.

Now, with your arms and hands as relaxed as possible, uncock your hands directly at where the ball would be, but don't let them go past an imaginary barrier in front of your left thigh, your body staying still in the top-of-the-backswing position. Feel the blood rushing to your fingertips. Do this until it is drilled into your muscle memory.

Part 2: Repeat the procedure, but after impact allow the momentum of your hands to break through the imaginary barrier and pull your body up to a full finish. Drill this in with a really aggressive swing.

Part 3: Now you can take some full practice swings with a club, retaining the feeling you have acquired. Finally, hit some balls focusing on that feeling.

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