

“The Golf Expert” The “Vital” 75 Percent

Peter Thompson

# “The Golf Expert”

## The “Vital” 75 Percent

Peter explains how your grip, aim, stance and posture will have a tremendous influence on your swing and hence the shot. A must read.



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## The “Vital” 75 Percent

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The computer programme I have used for the last six years is an excellent tool in my diagnosis of students overall game called GASP (Golf Analysis System for Professionals). It also stands for Grip, Aim, Stance and Posture.

### Peter Says:

In my opinion the Grip Aim Stance and Posture represents approximately 75 per cent of the shot. We will examine these four aspects in some detail and in the sequence they should occur prior to the shot taking place.



### AIM

Imagine an Olympic marksman or archer not taking dead aim at the target or a dart player not aiming at the target. The chances of success will be limited and hitting a golf ball towards the target is exactly the same. The leading edge of the clubface must be aligned at the target. An error of just one-degree means the ball will be ten feet off line by the time it has travelled 200 yards. Ten degrees and the shot is 100 feet off line. So it's pretty important. Take dead aim was one of the late Harvey Penniks key instructions and he was absolutely correct. He was so convinced of the importance of aiming the clubface at the target that he had 'Take Dead Aim' stamped on the range of clubs produced under his name.

I read a superb article in a golf magazine years ago and the author (I have forgotten his name) of the article was attempting to find out why Jack Nicklaus, Ben Hogan and Tom Watson were so successful. After many pages of research he came to his conclusion. His conclusion was that their success was based on just three aspects of their game.

1. They all had the same grip for all shots - he did not say their grips were all the same or describe their individual grips but they had the same grip all of the time.
2. They all had the same stance and posture – again he did not describe their stances and posture or say they were all the same he simply made the point that they had consistent stances and postures.
3. They all pointed the clubface at the target on every shot. The key to their success was consistency of grip, aim, stance and posture. It is not possible for everyone to have the same grip, stance, posture and swing because we are all different but we can be consistent. So learn to aim the clubface, have a friend assist you by standing behind you looking down the target line and believe what they say because they are standing behind the target line and you are standing to the side of it. You could also have a line on the ground pointing at the target and position the leading edge of your club at right angles to the line. Many tournament professionals are close friends and they spend a lot of time checking each other's alignment because it is so vital.

## **GRIP**

Sometimes called the 'hold', it really means the same. I call it a grip because the club is travelling at great speed and you need to keep control of it so hold the club as firmly as necessary. Please bear in mind that consistency is the key and the way you hold the club does not need to be a so-called textbook grip. For example the husband of a lady I had coached said her husband had given up having lessons because every professional he had been to attempted to change his grip. I said I would not so he had a series of lessons and with his so called unorthodox grip managed to score a gross 72 net 60 at Brockenhurst Manor Golf Club, a beautiful golf course in the equally beautiful New Forest, in a medal round.

Until Tiger Woods came on the scene the vast majority of golfers used the overlap grip where the little finger of the right hand nestles in between the first and second fingers of the left hand.

## Overlap Grip



**This is the overlap grip (used by Ben Hogan) where the little finger of the right hand rests on top of the first finger of the left hand.**

Tiger Woods however (as Jack Nicklaus did) uses the interlocking grip where the little finger of the right hand interlocks with the first finger of the right hand. This grip is now the currently the most popular way to hold the club. They are both correct and you need to use the one that works best for you.



## Interlock Grip



**This is the interlock grip (used by Tiger Woods) where the little finger of the right hand locks in between the first and second finger of the left hand.**

A third option, that is hardly ever used, is the double-handed grip where all the fingers of both hands are on the club. I watched Dai Rees, a superb golfer from Wales score a superb round of 65 at Belton Park Golf Club (c.1957) using the double handed grip so that grip cannot be incorrect.

## Double Handed Grip



**This shows the double-handed grip (used by Moe Norman) and has all of the fingers of both hands on the club and in contact with the grip.**

Tiger Woods said recently that only two golfers have been in control of their swings. The two golfers are Ben Hogan and Mo Norman and Tiger Woods would like to become the third. Ben Hogan used the overlap grip. Mo Norman used the double-handed grip. Tiger Woods uses the interlock grip. A consistent grip that works is the main criteria.

**View of the hands from the front shows two/three knuckles of the left hand are visible. The right hand covers the left thumb and the right forefinger is separated from the second finger so the first knuckle of the forefinger is just below or level with the end of the right thumb. Note the absence of any gaps between both hands. The three grips ie overlap, interlock and the doublehanded are all appear essentially to be the same from this view.**



## **STANCE**

Because you will not return to the address position at impact the stance is simply to aim you and the club at the target and to allow you to move back into a hitting position (top of the backswing). Your heels, hips and shoulders should be parallel to the target line (square) or slightly to the left (open). Never have a closed stance (aiming to the right) unless you need to put a draw spin on the ball (curving right to left) as the movements through the ball required to keep the clubface on line will be restricted. The left arm and club should be more or less in line with your weight central and slightly towards the toes. Have your right foot at right angles to the target line with the left foot turned to the left so your toes are slightly open (aiming left). This will help to control the length of the backswing and assist the weight transference to the left and the rotation through the shot. The ball position creates endless debate so try the Ben Hogan and Jack Nicklaus method of having the same ball position for every club.



The clubs are all different but to achieve a consistent swing have a consistent ball position. Your chin needs to be high so it is out of the way of the shoulder turn and be behind the ball (to the right). Some people I have taught initially believed that there was a different ball position for each club and then a different swing for each club. If you are in that category your golf will be far from satisfactory so simplify the whole process with one ball position and one swing.

## **POSTURE**

Push your hips outside your heels and have your legs almost straight from the knees down. Your arms should hang loosely from your shoulders with the toe of the club slightly off the ground as the forces in the swing will ensure the sole of the club head is parallel to the ground at impact. The right elbow should be slightly closer to you than the left.

These are all guidelines and cannot apply to everyone, as everyone is different. I explain to my pupils that all the cars on the car park at our busy complex are basically the same as they all have engines, gears, steering wheels, seats etc but they are also all different e.g. different colours, engine sizes, number of seats etc. The common denominators are always present in all good golfers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Create your stance based on your body shape paying attention to the principles outlined and strive for consistency. In my next article, I will explain the basic principles of the hitting position. This is also known as the backswing but I prefer the term hitting position, as it is not really possible to send the ball any real distance with a pure swing.

Thank you and keep looking for my future releases on the things you should know about the game of Golf and a wonderful game it is!