

“The Golf Expert” Should the Left Arm be Straight in the Back Swing?

Peter Thompson

“The Golf Expert”

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Peter will explain how important a straight left arm is within the backswing.



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I have been asked this question many hundreds of times and I will explain in this article my thoughts on this particular subject.

My lessons are based on 48 years' experience of coaching and observing how the best golfers have been able to produce outstanding results.....

The vast majority have had their left arms very straight in the address position and at the top of the back swing. So my consensus is that the left arm (for right handed golfers) should be straight because.....

- 1.) If the left arm bends in the back swing it has to straighten at impact, and the golfer cannot control when, or even if, it will straighten.
- 2.) If the left arm bends the width of the swing will be destroyed.
- 3.) If the left arm is bent at address then the golfer will be too close to the ball, and if the left arm subsequently straightens at impact the club head will be moving towards the ball. When I demonstrate this in my studio, it always results in a shank.

The left arm ideally will be straight at address and throughout the swing until the shaft is parallel to the ground after impact.

The left arm should not be kept straight on purpose. It is very important that this is understood.

A normal left arm can bend up to 160 degrees and this is clearly important for many daily activities. However, the golfer needs to keep the left arm straight ... but this must not be a conscious thought.

The first photograph shows my normal back swing with my left arm straight.



This was achieved by practicing the following exercise...

- 1.) Stand normally and then simply move your arms away from your chest until your hands are opposite your face. Moving your arms away from your body ensures your left arm will remain straight.

2.) Then hinge your wrists so the club head is moved approximately three feet above your head. Your left arm will still be straight. Then turn your hips and shoulders so the body turn moves your arms and your left arm will still be straight.

If, however, you only move your arms, your left arm is almost certain to bend as it is designed to bend, as the second photograph illustrates.



Your left arm should remain straight until after impact, but this can only be achieved by moving your arms, wrists and body correctly.

Peter Says:

In conclusion I have to say to many of my pupils, “straight arm - straight shots, bents arms - bent shots”

Best Wishes and Keep Golfing

