



# Mark Wood's Full-Swing Basics

7 Steps to  
Jump-Start  
Your Game  
for 2015

**On giving short 30-minute corporate clinics, I am normally speaking with a large group of golfers who are of varying abilities. As time is short and trying to cater for the mass I find that going through the seven simple basic steps I am going to share with you is perfect for golfers of all levels to grasp. If you implement these seven basics into your game, you'll be prepared for your best season ever.**

## **1. Grip in the Fingers**

One of the biggest mistakes I see many golfers making is with their grip. The main issue is how they place the grip in their left hand; it generally is gripped too much in the palm. An indicator of that is where you get a wear hole in the heel pad of the glove. Placing the club more in the fingers of the left hand (see below photos) helps eliminate tension in the swing and also allows the wrists to cock more naturally. I also find that by just improving your grip you will be amazed at how many times this can cure other niggling swing flaws. Make sure that when gripping the club you sit it diagonally across the base of the fingers and that you have a short left thumb.



## 2. Balance and Solidity in the core for a strong base

Balance is paramount to building a firm base; it is all about what's going on beneath your waist. If you have a solid posture and engage and stabilize your core muscles this will ensure that you swing consistently. Take your regular set up position and then lift the clubhead up away from the ground by a few inches (see below photos). Whilst in this position I would like you to feel the stability and solidness in your stance. You will feel that the glutes and core muscles are fired up and ready for action. Lower the club back down to the ground and keep the feeling of being ready for a nice powerful golf swing.





### 3. Aim the Face First

The first thing to do when building your stance is to aim the clubface square to your intended target. From there you can build your stance around that, the feet, knees, hips and shoulders should all be running parallel to your target line. Another little check here is to make sure your body lines are at right angles to the leading edge of the clubface. A common trait I see amongst many amateurs who struggle with their alignment is that they aim their bodies first, they tend to aim their feet and shoulders at the target which throws the clubface alignment completely out. Aim the face at something on your target line that is only a few inches in front of your ball. This could be an old divot mark or a blade of grass; this will quickly reinforce the direction your clubface is aiming and where you want the ball ultimately to go.



### 4. Ball Position



Always bear in mind that each different club has a different swing arc, for example the shaft of the driver is between eight and ten inches longer than that of the irons. Meaning that you need to adjust your stance in relation to the ball dependant to the club you are using.

There are three key rules for ball position;

1. The longer the club, the farther forward the ball should be in your stance.  
The driver should be opposite your left heel and the fairway woods, hybrids and long irons should be 2 inches inside your left heel. All the short to medium irons should be played just slightly forward of centre.
2. The longer the club, the farther away you should stand from the ball
3. The longer the club, the wider your stance should get being at its widest for the driver.

## 5. Wind and Unwind to produce power

A good drill to illustrate how the body is meant to powerfully rotate during the swing consists of getting into your stance and placing your hands on your hips. While staying in this stance turn your upper body as if to look at someone behind you, this will produce a strong tension in your lower body. Strongly unwind your upper body while shifting your weight into your front foot, following on to a poised finish balanced on your right toes and chest facing the target.





## 6. Let the Club Swing Freely

I have got a cracking drill that will get you swinging the club easily and effortlessly on a great swing shape around your body on a great plane resulting in a good swing path through the ball. I would like you to take hold of the club with just your right hand only and then place your left hand on your hip. You will instantly feel the weight of the club and as you swing the club up and around the body and then back down and through impact to the full follow through, it will encourage that good swing shape. Holding it with just your right hand will stop you from over controlling and manipulating the natural golf swing. Practise this a few times and then place your left hand back onto the grip and hit some shots with the same feel in mind.



## 7. Develop Great Rhythm and Tempo

The start of the golf swing is your perfect chance to create the rhythm and tempo needed for a good consistent golf swing that is repeatable. The golf swing starts from a static position and we all need a feel to stop getting tense and jerky during the move away from the ball. Jack Nicklaus used to say the first 6 inches of the takeaway is the most important part of the golf swing. That is why you see golf professionals, such as Gary Player, have a key (he used to kick his right knee in) as a trigger to start his swing.

To develop a good free flowing movement to start the golf swing I would like to recommend that you do this drill. Whilst you are on the range practising I would like you to hover the clubhead off the ground a couple of feet ahead of the ball (see below photo). Now start the swing from here. You'll immediately sense and feel your backswing and transition into the downswing become a lot smoother and more free flowing. Hitting the ball will seem effortless and the consistency of your ball striking will improve dramatically.



## Mark Wood Biography

I turned pro in 1996 after a fairly successful amateur career and my journey into the professional ranks was very interesting. As a kid I remember buying almost every instructional book, video and most of the monthly golfing publications as I was devoted and hooked in becoming a better player. I was like a kid so passionate about golf; my brain was a sponge soaking up all the different swing techniques and short game methods as I wanted to be the best golfer in the world.

As time went on I soon realised that a lot of what I was reading and seeing was confusing advice and I was not advancing the way I thought I should be. So after a short time I decided that I needed a coach who would help me fulfil my passion and goals. I must have gone through 6 or 7 coaches before I found a great coach called Nick Bradley who was coaching some of the finest professionals in the world. Nick really



helped my golf, and me. I remember going to watch Nick coaching his professionals and I got a real buzz from that and I started to realise that the dream of becoming the best golfer in the world was not for me, I wanted to be a coach. That was quite an eureka moment for me as I could not understand that the tournaments that I was playing in I was more interested about the players swings and games than I was my own!! Even playing social golf outside of tournaments with friends I was always giving them advice of what shots they should hit and advice on their techniques, I was so much more concerned about everybody else's game apart from mine, and I was trying to make a living from playing golf!!

From that point onward I turned my attention full time into becoming a great golf coach who is driven and passionate about helping golfers of all abilities improve. I get a great buzz from helping golfers starting out in the game as I do when one of my pro clients wins an event.