

This month:
CUT OUT LEAKS TO GAIN
Power!

Forget body-building or trying to crease the ball into next week. Longer hitting is about cutting out the errors that leak power from your swing. Our team reveals why you should be choosing smoothness over smashing, and stability over strength. ➔

Photography: Bob Atkins - swing/swirl photography application at Vale do Lobo, Portugal (Tel: 00351 229 353355), body photographed at Malbury Manor Golf, Weymouth (Tel: 01520 487721)

WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK: SWING, BRAIN, BODY OR GEAR? FIND OUT WITH OUR GANG...

Meet
Team TG...

THE COACH

Adrian Fryer
● Telephone: 01925 234800 or adrian@drivetimeuk.com
Adrian's swing know-how is based on 23 years' teaching. His approach is flexible; longer trying to hone a swing with geometric precision, just focus your technique on attainable essentials. Adrian teaches everyone from starter to pro, and coaches for the Cheshire County Ladies' Golf Association.



THE SPORTS PSYCHOLOGIST

Dr Karl Morris
● Telephone: 01942 729836 or see www.golf-brain.com
Karl will show you how to think your way to better golf. He is a trained sports psychologist who works with the ELGA at national level, and is also a consultant and workshop-presenter with the PGA of GB and Europe. His practical tips demystify golf psychology.



THE GOLF FITNESS TRAINER

Tristan Huckle
● Telephone: 07973 155027 or tristan.huckle@btopenworld.com
Tristan will show you how you can improve your golf by training your body. Europe's only qualified golf biomechanic, Tristan has worked on fitness with all standards, from hackers to Colin Montgomerie. And don't think you'll need to fork out for a load of fancy gym gear – you can do all Tristan's drills at the club.





THE COACH
Adrian Fryer

5 POWER LEAK SOURCES

Common wisdom goes that if you want to hit the ball further, you should hit it harder. It would be nice if it was that simple, but try this tactic and you'll generally find your drives going 30 yards shorter. Harder hitting means less control. Sure, every once in a while you might get lucky and cane one miles down the fairway. But no one consistently achieves a well-timed impact when out of control. The real key to hitting the ball further is to understand that power is more about avoiding common errors than straining every sinew for an extra 10 yards. In this feature I want you to grasp the five ways power can leak from your swing. Once you identify these leaks, you can set about plugging them and watching your drives sail further down the fairway.

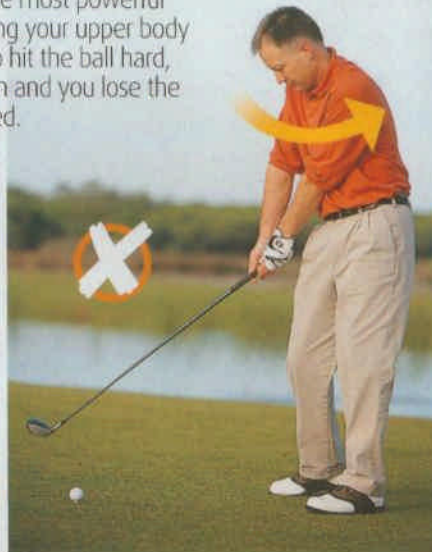
LEAK 1 LOSS OF COIL IN DOWNSWING

During your backswing you wind your body up powerfully, shoulders turned more than hips. The most powerful downswing sees your hips unwinding your upper body into the ball. But often in an effort to hit the ball hard, your upper body unwinds on its own and you lose the coiled stored power you have created.

POWER IT UP!

Keep shoulders turned

Make your normal backswing. Then ask a friend to put his hand gently on your left shoulder. Practise unwinding your hips while your friend applies a little pressure to hold the shoulder in its delayed position.



Develop the feeling of your hips unwinding your body. Picture a downswing that unwinds from the ground upwards, not from your shoulders downwards.

LEAK 2 PALMY GRIP

Holding the club in your palms can feel comfortable because you have a lot of flesh on the grip. It may feel like you have more control, but in terms of power, it's a definite no-no.

When you grip the club in your palms, you instantly limit your wrists' mobility. Your wrist hinge is a serious source of power, and a palmy grip means less wrist hinge.



POWER IT UP!

Get it in your fingers

Instead, feel the grip running across the fingers of both hands. It can take some getting used to, but you'll feel the extra mobility in your wrists by 'writing' your name in the sky with the clubhead.

This finger grip allows you to hinge your wrists as you swing back, giving you extra stored power to release at impact.



DO YOU INTERLOCK?

The interlocking grip - where the index finger of left and little finger of right hands entwine - often causes a palmy grip, because people tend to interlock at the base of their fingers. I'd be happy to see the interlocking grip vanish from golf, but Woods and Nicklaus have made it popular. If you must interlock, go down only to your knuckles. That allows you to keep the grip in your fingers.



LEAK 3 POOR WEIGHT SHIFT

"Get your weight behind the ball" is a well-known power tip. The problem is that amateurs tend to overdo it. They get what I call a 'drift and lift' move. Your weight may move on to the back foot but you do not make a turning motion, the powerful coil the pros display. Instead of just throwing your weight back, feel your weight rotate over your back foot through your backswing turn. Here are two drills to help you achieve it.



POWER IT UP! ⚡

Rotate your weight



WEIGHT DRILL #1

Hold a club out in front of you, shaft parallel to the ground and hands at either end. Take up an approximate address position.

Turn into your backswing, keeping the shaft of your club horizontal throughout the movement, as if you were placing the club on a table by your side. Keep turning till you feel your back facing the target. When it does, you will feel your weight over your flexed right leg.



WEIGHT DRILL #2

Again, take up an approximate address position, but this time fold your arms. Drop your right shoulder a touch to simulate address.

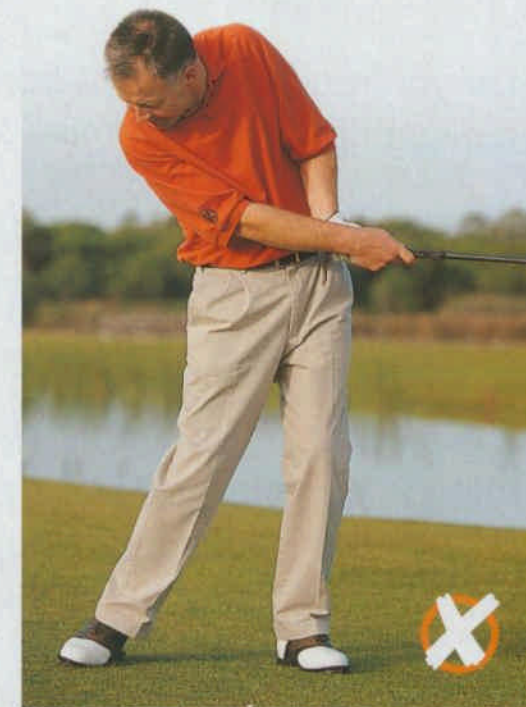
Again make a backswing rotation, keeping your shoulders level (same distance from the ground) as you go. Again, the turning motion will help you move your weight over your back foot. Both drills teach you that the weight shift happens in a smaller space than you may have imagined.

LEAK 4 KEEPING YOUR HEAD STILL



When you keep your head stock still, you limit your ability to make a full backswing turn. A static head restricts the free-swinging motion of your arms. That robs you of the chance to build up vital momentum and maximum clubhead speed.

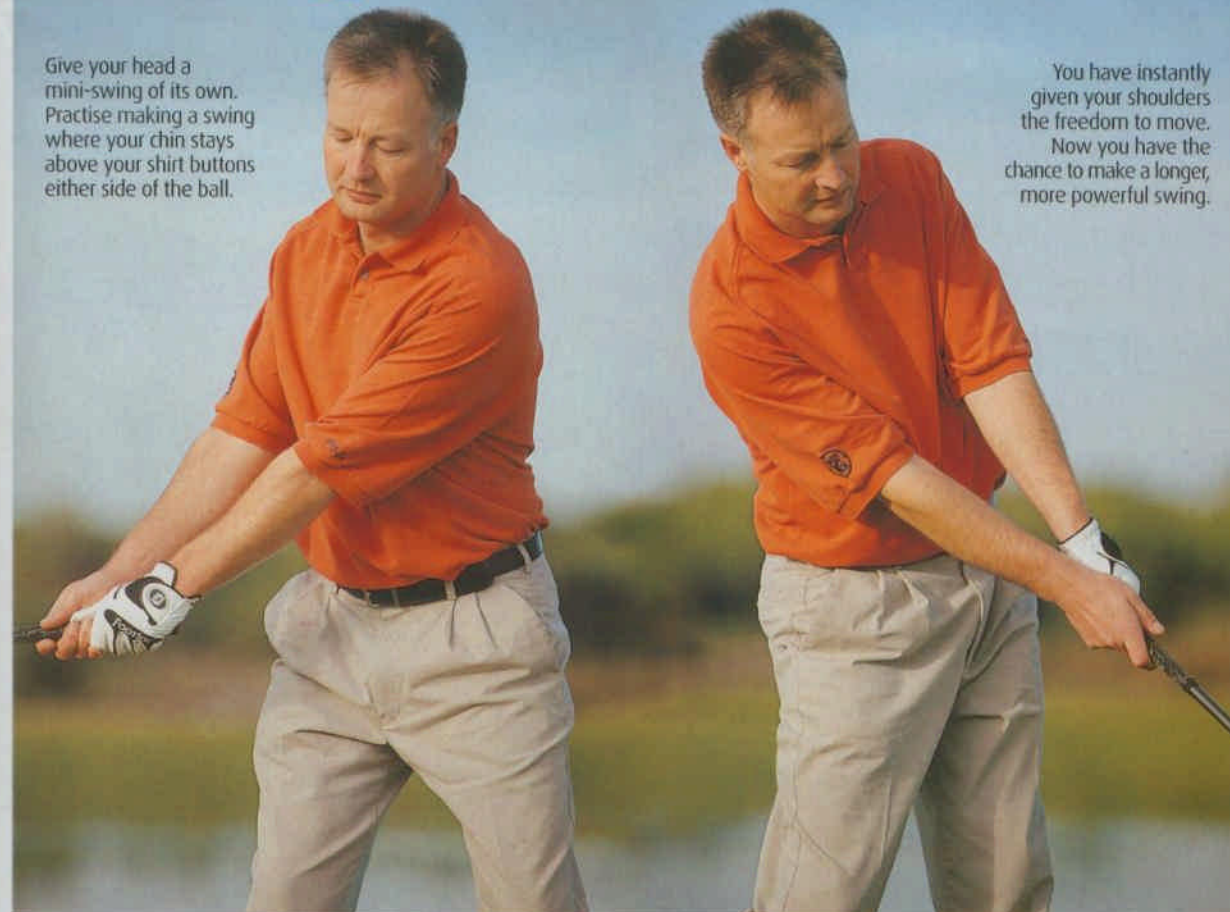
Keeping your head still also stops freedom of movement through the ball. You will make a trapped, flicky, handsy release through impact because your locked head is restricting your shoulder movement.



POWER IT UP! ⚡

Chin follows chest

Give your head a mini-swing of its own. Practise making a swing where your chin stays above your shirt buttons either side of the ball.



You have instantly given your shoulders the freedom to move. Now you have the chance to make a longer, more powerful swing.

**LEAK
5
HITTING
TOO
EARLY**

Many amateurs are so hungry for power that they try to hit the ball as soon as the downswing begins. The club reaches maximum speed some way from the ball. By the time it has reached impact, it is slowing down.

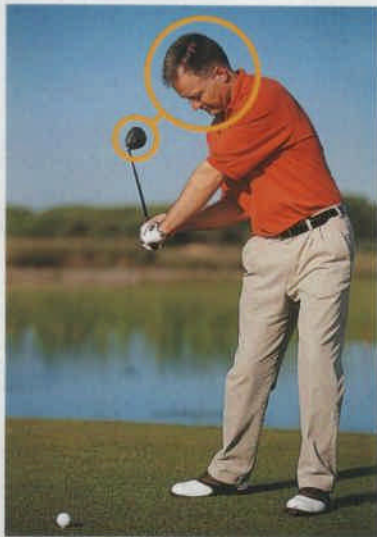
POWER IT UP! 

Think narrow-to-wide

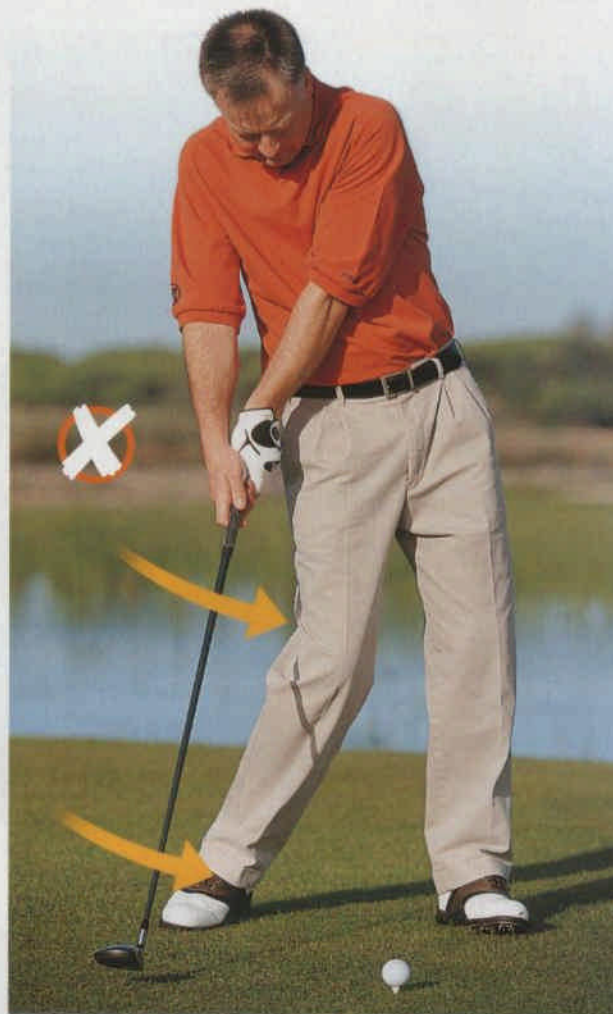
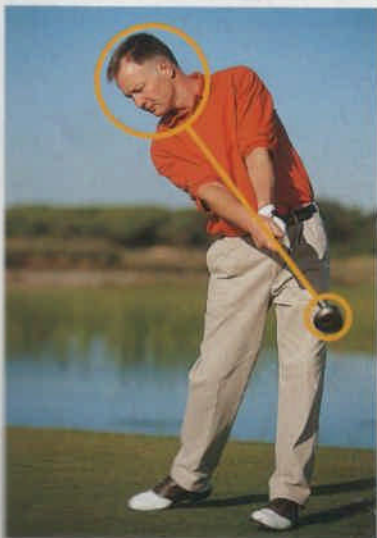
DRILL #1

Separate your heads

Focus on your head and your clubhead. As you swing, you want to feel they are as close together as possible halfway into the downswing.



From here on your goal is to try and separate them, so that just after impact you have put as much distance between your head and clubhead as possible. This is a simple way of holding on to your hit and feeling as much power as possible into the ball. Think narrow before impact, wide after.



DRILL #2



Throw something heavy

Find something heavy and round. I've got a melon; don't ask me why. Practise swinging down with it, but firing it into the ground holeside of the ball. If your object strikes the ground before the ball, it's a sure sign you are releasing your power too early in the swing. When it strikes the ground holeside, it shows you are channelling the power flowing down your arms into the ball at the right time - impact.