

20 BEST DRILLS EVER!

Fix golf's common faults in minutes with Adrian Fryer's simple tips

WORDS KIT ALEXANDER PICTURES BOB ATKINS

Practice drills are simple but effective ways for any golfer to develop their technique – from complete beginner to Tour pro. The methodical and repetitive nature of using them can help fix a fault, engrain a new feeling or develop a new skill in minutes. And they can be carried out on the course, at the range or even at home in front of a mirror.

We've compiled 19 of our favourite drills that can be used to improve every area of your game: from swing fundamentals to short game proficiency... and everything in between. Each one can be undertaken with just a club or a simple piece of kit everyone has in their bag.

Now is the perfect time to analyse your tendencies, pinpoint areas for improvement and use the drills over the next eight pages to help hone your technique, wherever you need to improve.



DRILL 1 STAY CONNECTED

A glove under your armpit can help you avoid becoming 'flicky' at impact

A common fault golfers have when pitching and chipping is thinking it's just a hands and arms shot, which results in the arms separating from the body during the swing and the hands getting very 'flicky' at impact. If you keep the upper arms closer to the body it will stabilise the arms and your swing. The club will be moved by gentle body rotation and the wrists and hands stay quite passive, which makes it easier to control clubface rotation and return it square at impact.

STAY CONNECTED

Keeping a glove tucked under your left armpit as you swing ensures your arms and body stay connected, so the body turn drives the swing and the hands and wrists can stay relatively passive.

DRILL 2 WAVE BYE TO A FLYING ELBOW

Keep the right elbow tucked in at the top of your backswing

If you tend to cross the line at the top of the backswing, with the shaft pointing to the right of the target, it's because you have a flying right elbow. This drill promotes a bit of

forearm rotation, encourages the wrist to hinge correctly, keeps the elbow more in front of you and sets the club on plane, so you can create a better swing path and more accurate shots.

TUCKED RIGHT ELBOW

Your left palm should be facing straight behind you at the top of the backswing and your left arm should be slightly bent. This keeps your elbow tucked in so you can set the club on plane.

HAND BEHIND ELBOW

Address the ball with your left hand behind your right elbow and the palm facing straight away from your target. Maintain pressure between your left hand and right elbow as you make a slow backswing.



DRILL 3 ONE-PIECE TAKEAWAY

Synchronise the arms and body very quickly

A lot of players move the clubhead away from the ball too quickly, leading to independent hand movement within the first foot of the takeaway and the club rolling inside too early, opening the face. This loses the connection between

the arms and body, preventing them from working together. The "hand behind the left wrist" drill promotes more of a one-piece takeaway, keeping the shaft on plane and synchronising the turn of the body and the arms takeaway.

LEAD WITH RIGHT HAND

Place your right hand in front of your left and slowly start your takeaway with the big muscles doing the work. This keeps the takeaway on plane and retains the connection between arms and body.



KEEP RIGHT HEEL UP

Address the ball as normal, but with your right heel slightly off the ground. Keep your foot in this position as you swing to the top to develop resistance in the backswing and a neutral swing plane.



DRILL 4 CREATE RESISTANCE

Lift the right heel and get on plane at the top

A lot of players over-turn their right hip too early in the backswing, which whips the club inside and means the swing plane gets too flat. This drill

creates torque and resistance in the body, limits the rotation of the hips a little and forces the club back and up on the correct plane. ▶

DRILL 5 A SOLID LEFT WRIST

Develop good body release with split hands

This drill will help if your left wrist is prone to breaking down at impact, causing poor clubface control. This happens when the body stops turning and the hands overtake it and get

'flippy' at impact. If you do this incorrectly you'll hit it fat. Doing it correctly develops a stable impact that can be seen by the left arm and club shaft forming a straight line just after contact.



HANDS SLIGHTLY APART

Use a three-quarter swing and separate the hands by three millimetres on the grip to discourage them from getting 'flippy' and promote a stable impact, where the body turn is the driving force.



DRILL 6 DELIVERY PATH, NOT TARGET LINE, IS KEY

Attack the ball from the inside and square the face at impact to cure a slice

Many players confuse the target line with the delivery path. To get the club square to the target line at the point of impact, you must swing it down the delivery line, which is slightly from the inside. If you swing down the target line you will cut across the ball at impact, which produces slice spin.

Placing two clubs on the ground to show your target line and delivery path is a powerful visual tool. Your clubhead should mirror the delivery path as you come into impact and the clubface should be squaring up to the target line as you hit the ball. This should produce straight shots, or a slight draw.



DELIVERY AND TARGET LINES

Place one club just outside the ball pointing straight down your target line. Then lay another one over the top on a slightly inside angle as a visual representation of your delivery path; this is the crucial line.

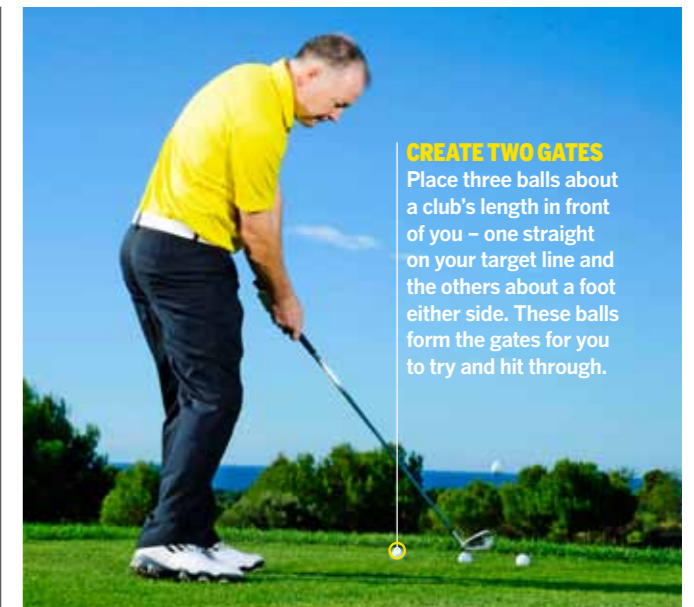
DRILL 7 IRON ATTACK ANGLE

Improve your striking and flight for more spin

To hit a good iron shot you need to compress the ball at impact with the club approaching the ball slightly from the inside. This drill helps you do this in two stages. The first tee peg angled into the back of the ball at about 4 o'clock is a visual reference of the optimum approach angle. Develop the feeling of attacking slightly on the inside by swinging down to impact and tapping the tee as if you were hammering a nail.

Once you're comfortable with this feeling you can remove the tee and hit shots. If you compress the ball correctly with a downward blow and hit it from the inside then you should clip or remove the second tee, which is a couple of inches in front of the ball.

Doing this correctly will produce a divot that starts after the ball. Divots are a consequence of applying the club on the right path and the correct angle of approach.



CREATE TWO GATES

Place three balls about a club's length in front of you – one straight on your target line and the others about a foot either side. These balls form the gates for you to try and hit through.

DRILL 8 HOW TO SHAPE SHOTS

Neutralise your path and learn how to shape it

A neutral swing path helps you shape shots. You can develop the feel of coming slightly from the inside or the outside by hitting balls through some 'gates' just in front of you. You must change the direction of your ball's start line

by altering your swing path – not the angle of the clubface. Hitting through the right gate gives the feel of coming from the inside for a draw, and vice versa. If your ball goes outside the end balls you are over-manipulating the swing path.

DRILL 9 STOP THE REVERSE PIVOT

Develop a proper hip turn to stop a lateral shift

Many people think you must have weight shift in the backswing and incorrectly push their weight across into the right hip, which causes the hips to tilt and the spine to lean towards the target. This creates a

reverse pivot, poor sequencing in the downswing and shots such as fats, thins and slices. Instead, feel the hips turn in their own space, so they don't shift laterally or tilt too steeply in the backswing.



PEN IN YOUR POCKET

Put a pen or long tee in your back right pocket and an alignment stick or cane behind you and address the ball so the cane is in the centre of your stance and running up your spine.

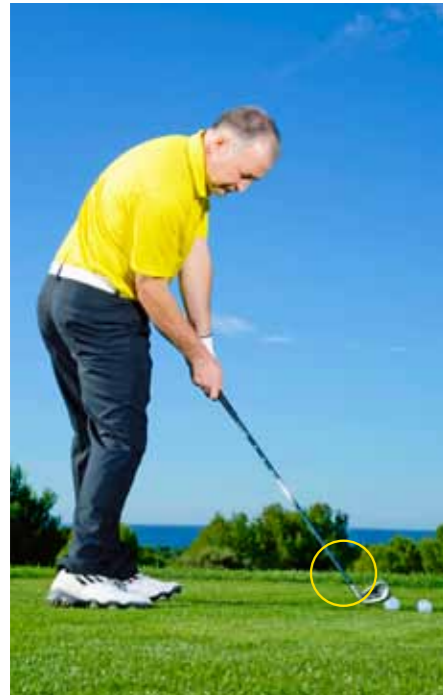
PEN TOWARDS THE CANE

Create the feeling of the hips turning rather than sliding in the backswing by moving the pen towards the cane. The hips will only be very slightly tilted at the top of the backswing.

DRILL 10 ANTI-SHANK

Stop the most feared shot in golf with the most simple drill

Shanks happen for three reasons: attacking too much from the inside; attacking too much from the outside; or the head, body and club moving towards the ball during the swing. In all cases you need to get the hosel of the clubhead further from the ball at impact. This drill helps establish a more neutral swing path that gets the ball in the centre of the clubface at impact.



NEUTRAL ATTACK ANGLE

Place another ball just outside – and behind – the ball you're going to hit, as shown above. Just missing that ball as you come into impact encourages a neutral path and a centred strike.

DRILL 11 PERFECT WOODS SET-UP

Find the correct spine angle for driver and fairways

This establishes the correct amount of spine lean to create a sweeping blow with a driver or fairway wood. You should tilt your spine slightly away from the target at address because these clubs need to be struck with a level (or slightly upward for the driver) blow, as they have less loft and because the ball is forward in the stance.



TILT THE CLUB

Hold the club vertically down from your sternum and tilt your spine until the grip touches the inside of your front leg to find the right amount of spine tilt for driver and fairway woods.

DRILL 12 ADDRESS CHIPS CORRECTLY

Perfect your alignment and swing arc when chipping

This drill encourages you to aim the clubface at the target correctly as well as produce the gently arcing stroke which is ideal for hitting sweet chips. Lots of club golfers open the face too much when they chip and start glancing across the ball – before they know it, their stroke is a compensation of poor aim and

poor swing path. So, picture your chipping stroke as a mini version of the full swing with the club arcing around your body slightly as you swing and the clubface staying square to this arc. The clubface should automatically open to the target in the backswing and close again to square up into impact.



CLUBS POINT AT TARGET

Make a corridor with two clubs – pointing straight at your target – lying a couple of inches either side of the ball. Use them to align your body and clubface correctly. Now develop a gentle in-to-square-to-in arc when you are chipping.

DRILL 13 STOP YOUR SLICE

Right shoulder move cures your banana shot

This stops players coming over the top – a common cause of a slice – and creates the correct feeling of the body action in the downswing. It makes the hips shift and rotate, creates a bit of

spine tilt and encourages your right shoulder to work down the plane. As your shoulder works down the plane your hips will react correctly and the clubface will square up into impact.



CLUB SQUARE TO SHOULDERS

The clubface should be aligned squarely to your shoulders with the toe pointing up. This will simulate the shaft and clubface angle throughout the swing if the club was held normally.



HOW IT LOOKS FACE ON

Halfway down you can see the spine is angled slightly away from the target and the hips have started unwinding. The right shoulder looks low because it is working from the inside.



HOW IT LOOKS DOWN THE LINE

At the same point from this angle, the tilt of the shoulders should match the angle of the club shaft. The shaft pointing at the ball shows that the club is swinging on a neutral plane.

DRILL 14 STOP GETTING STEEP WITH THE COSSACK TURN

Groove a rounded shoulder turn and a coil – rather than a tilt – as well as good elbow positions

Golfers mistakenly trying to get their left shoulder under their chin often end up with an overly steep shoulder turn. To encourage the correct feeling of a more rounded

shoulder turn, assume this 'Cossack' position with your forearms mirroring your shoulder angle at address. When you turn as if you are making the backswing your forearms should

be close to parallel to the ground because your shoulders have turned on a marginally tilted plane. You've created a turn and a coil rather, than a tilt.

ARMS PARALLEL TO SHOULDERS

Set-up in your address position for a driver and fold your arms as shown here. Your forearms should be parallel to your shoulders on a slightly upward angle.

GOOD ELBOW POSITION

The elbows are in a very similar position to where they'd be at the top of an on-plane backswing if you were holding a club – level and not flaring or too high.

**DRILL 15 HIT YOUR CHIPS CRISPLY**

Miss the headcover for a descending attack angle

It's the action of trapping the ball that creates a good strike and produces spin around the greens. Most players have quite a shallow attack angle so putting a headcover about two feet behind the ball forces you to develop a more downward blow that encourages a better and more predictable contact.

**JUDGE THE BREAK**

You can take this drill to the next level by doing it on a slope. It will help you understand how much the ball will break over different lengths of putt and severities of slope.

DRILL 16 HOLE OUT WITH NO FEAR

How to build confidence as well as a neutral stroke

Holing out is a vital part of golf – we all have to do it on the majority of holes we play – so establishing confidence in this aspect of the game is a key part of success, no matter if you are a Tour pro or a high handicapper. Holing out balls in a straight line on a relatively flat green at two, three, four and five feet from the hole will help to build this confidence as well as hone the neutral putting stroke, which is crucial to consistent success from short range. Always start with the shortest putt and work gradually away from the hole, keeping the same quality and rhythm in your stroke – the five-footer will feel a lot shorter and more makeable than if you attempted it without the shorter putts first.

DRILL 17 IDEAL AIM

Improve your alignment to avoid manipulating the stroke

A lot of putting faults arise from poor aim followed by compensations during the stroke. Drawing a T on the ball, so you can point the line at your aim point and square the putter face to the horizontal line, really helps to aim and start the ball rolling where you want to without having to make any compensations. This will also help develop a more centred and consistent strike that will improve your distance control.

**DRILL 18 NO MORE SCOOPING CHIPS**

Claw grip keeps right hand passive for sweeter strikes

Most golfers who struggle with their chipping try to help the ball up or scoop it with their right hand, which results in the wrists breaking down and inconsistent contact. Chipping with the claw grip makes the right hand more passive, so you focus on presenting the club correctly at impact with the shaft leaning slightly forwards, the clubface square and a descending blow.

**CLAW GRIP**

Grip the club as normal with your left hand but turn your right hand around and hold the club between your thumb and index finger. The left hand is powering the stroke and right hand simply helps to guide the direction.

DRILL 19 QUIET PUTTING HANDS

Keep the hands inactive and stroke with the shoulders

Poor putting is often a product of the hands being too busy and 'flicky' during the stroke and particularly at impact. Putting with a ball between your right wrist and the grip locks your arms,

hands and club as one and encourages you to make the stroke from the shoulders. The hands and wrists stay quiet and simply ride the rocking motion of the shoulders.

**GENTLE PRESSURE ON THE BALL**

You may have to grip down on the putter slightly to do this and you should only gently squeeze the ball to keep it in place. This gentle pressure should remain constant throughout the whole stroke.

Shot on location at Lumine Golf, Tarragona, Spain. Visit www.lumine.com for more information



DRILL 20 UNDERSTAND PLANE

Get the club on a neutral plane at the top of the backswing and post-impact for accurate shots

Golf clubs are designed perfectly for the job they're intended to do and the angle of the shaft gives you a clue to the plane the club needs to arc round your body on.

This correct arc is known as a neutral plane and swinging along it enables you to deliver the club to the ball square and on the correct angle, for straight and accurate shots.

You can use a mirror at the range or at home to check your shaft angle and swing plane at vital points and develop the feeling of moving to and from those correct positions.

PARALLEL CLUBS

Hold two mid-irons with the shafts parallel at address and make a backswing with your right arm.

AT THE TOP

The angle of the shaft at the top of the swing will be parallel to the club you're holding at address if you've set it on a neutral plane.

THROUGH EXIT

The shaft should poke through the left shoulder in the follow-through and will be parallel to the shaft at address for a neutral follow-through that encourages a good impact position.

