

CLASSIC LESSONS

HENRY COTTON'S TYRE DRILL

For the past century, golf's sharpest minds have endeavoured to communicate how to hit a golf ball further and straighter and better. Some attempts are best forgotten. Others, though, have remained memorable and stood the test of time... and for one pretty good reason: they work. In this series we're going to bring these classic lessons back to life and see how they fit in to modern-day thinking. We start with an object you'd do well to keep in a quiet corner of your garden or garage – an old tyre.

What Cotton believed
 "You're only as good as your hands." This was the most strongly-held belief of three-time Open winner Henry Cotton. He saw clubface control in the same context as a tennis racquet or table tennis paddle. "The problem though," he once said, "is that the club is a yard long and weighs a pound. If a golfer wants to control the clubface, he

needs stronger hands."
 Cotton believed the best way to strengthen the hands for golf – and to draw out our instinctive knowledge of using hands to deliver a square face – was to hit an old tyre, first with a stick, and then a golf club. He called it "The Secret".

Speed rating

As his pupils gained strength, Cotton would move them on to swinging with increasing speed into a tyre. This, he felt, was the best method he could find of training the hands to deliver the clubhead with speed and under control. To try this, start with half-swings. Leave technical thoughts to one side and focus simply on delivering the club into the back of the tyre. Build swing length and speed only when you are confident of being able to absorb the strike and its rebound.

**Tread carefully**

Because this was an exercise designed to build strength, Cotton understood he had to get his pupils to start slowly. He would begin by asking them to flip the club and bang the grip end back and forth against the inside of the tyre. Building up some initial wrist and hand strength, this would be a good place to start.

YOUR COACH



ADRIAN FRYER
 solidgolf.co.uk
 Fellow of the PGA based
 at Liverpool Golf Centre
 liverpoolgolfcentre.co.uk



TYRE DRILL WHY IT'S STOOD THE TEST OF TIME

For Cotton, the tyre drill was about strengthening the hands and teaching them to work in unison to deliver a square clubface. While it certainly aids both elements, it is also a fantastic way of training excellent impact mechanics.

Striking gold

In a sound impact position we see a series of common denominators:

- Weight/pressure is stable over the lead leg.
- The lead wrist is in a flat and strong position.
- The trail wrist is releasing, but not yet fully released.
- The clubhead is behind the handle (irons) or near level with it (driver).

Look back to the tyre strike on the previous page and you'll see all these impact conditions created naturally and instinctively. The tyre itself promotes this by being an object you would look to drive forward rather than lift up in the air; but in offering resistance to this more driven strike, the tyre captures and strengthens these desirable techniques. Modern impact bags offer a more user-friendly way of delivering a similar effect.

**The anti-strike**

Scooping, casting, flipping... whatever we call it, we've all done it. When we throw the clubhead past the hands we hit weak, high shots at best, or outright duffs and thins at worst. It remains one of the most damaging ballstriking errors, and one of the most difficult to eradicate. But there are few ways better than by striking a tyre.

