HOW TO GAIN POWER

With a single extra MPH of clubhead speed gaining you three extra yards of distance, even a modest swing power increase can get you a club or two closer to the green. That said, that extra speed is only any good to you if it is controlled and allows you to find the centre of the face. Tailored to your skill level, these ideas will allow you to achieve that...

Shot at the beautiful Dunas Course at Terras da Comporta, Lisbon, Portugal. **comporta.com**

YOUR COACH

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BREAK 100
Find some thick rough

Apologies to all 100-Breakers. I'd love to talk to you about X-Factors, Force Plates and ground reaction forces, but I'm afraid I have a much simpler approach for you. All I want you to do is take your 7-iron, find a patch of thick, lush rough – well away from the course's playing lines – and swing away.

Simpler is better

If you're disappointed by this lack of sophistication, don't be. Simplicity is at the core of many of golf's best training exercises – this one was good enough for Seve and is no exception. Driving the clubhead through thick, heavy grass is not just the perfect way to strengthen your hitting muscles; it also develops your sense of timing by forcing you to apply maximum power through the impact zone.

Rough diamond

Try swinging at thick rough for any length of time and the first thing you'll notice is your arms getting tired pretty quickly! But persevere and you'll also notice that your mechanics start to improve. You'll see the futility of hanging back or flicking at the grass; instead you'll drive your weight forwards, your hands leading the clubhead through the long grass. In other words, you'll develop the often underused leverage in your arms and wrists that allows you to maximise clubhead speed. If you can build in three 10-minute sessions a week, you'll see a clear improvement in both your power and your ballstriking.

BREAK 90
Improve your power sequence

Many would-be 80-shooters have bags of power potential, but their movement patterns ensure that potential is never fully realised. Most commonly, the culprit is sequencing. We are used to hitting things with our chest, shoulders and arms and these can often lead the downswing attack. However, in the golf swing we develop maximum force and speed when we build from the ground up, the lower body moving the upper body, which moves the arms and club. This exercise will help you wake up that powerful sequence.

1. Swing to a tee peg
Begin this exercise by taking your regular stance... but before you take the club away, pull your lead foot back against your trail foot. Allow your driver to hover in front of you.

2. Swing back
From this unusual start position, swing back. As your hands and arms swing upwards past your chest, take an expansive stride forward with your lead foot and leg. You should feel a definite sensation of your body working in two, opposing directions – upper body swinging back, lower half driving forward.

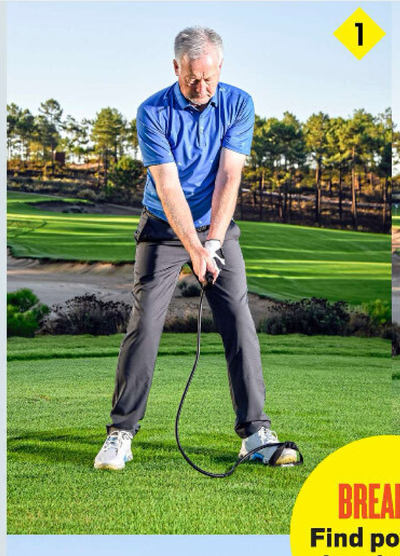
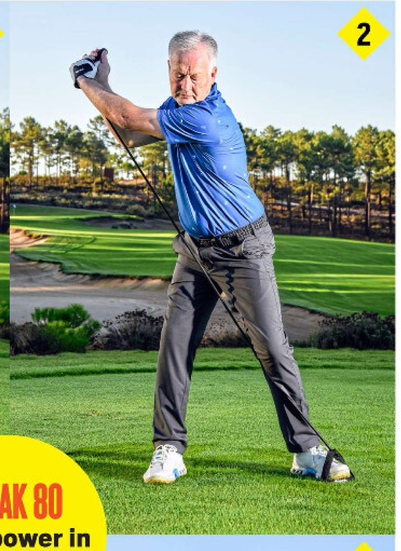
Stored power
This strong lead-leg stride should also give you a clear feeling of how it's your lower body – not the chest and shoulders – that drives the downswing forward. Leading down with the lower body allows us to store the powerful hitting angles we have created in the arms and wrists. If we allow the chest and shoulders to hit from the top, those angles are thrown away long before impact.

3. Power play
When we take that stride forward and replant the lead foot, we set up the ideal power sequencing at the change of direction – lower body leads, upper body follows. This quieter and more responsive upper half sees wrist angles preserved, carried and released naturally through impact, delivering speed when it matters. No matter what your build, strength or athleticism, improving your sequencing remains an achievable and largely effortless way to add power to your swing.

BREAK 80
Find power in hand travel

If you are regularly shooting in the low 80s, your power is probably getting closer to your potential. Timing and sequencing could be an issue for you, but the chances are we need to look elsewhere. An excellent option here is hand travel. Powerful players develop strong, wide hand arcs that give the club more time and room to build speed, but developing this wide arc takes more effort and athleticism than many 80-shooters realise. Try this exercise... ideally with an elasticated resistance band.

1. Hand/foot focus
Drop the club for a moment and take up your address position. Focus on your hands, your lead foot and the gap between them. If you have the resistance band, grip one end and wrap the other around your lead toecap.

2. Max the gap
Make a backswing with the sole intention of creating as much space as possible between your hands and your lead foot. Obviously you can try this without the band, but the feeling of maximising the stretch in the band provides excellent feedback, as well as conditioning your 'stretch' muscles.

3. Bring in the club
After repeating the stretch several times, drop the band, pick up the driver and repeat. Look for feelings of your arms being wider, your hands higher and your coil tighter. Overall, your position at the top should now feel more springy and energised. Ultimately, the more you wind up a spring, the faster and more powerfully it can unwind... and that's exactly what this expanded hand travel is giving you here.