



# The New Fundamentals

Eight breakthrough lessons that will prepare  
you for your best season ever

*By The Top 100 Teachers with David DeNunzio and Michael Walker, Jr.*

PHOTOGRAPHY *by* SCHECTER LEE

**I**T'S EASY TO FORGET that your game comes down to repeatedly executing a few basic fundamentals. And that's the thing about the basics: Because you must do them every time, you tend to forget about them in the way that you don't really think about tying your shoes—you just do it. But since there is so much movement and focus required in your swing and the preparation for it, if you don't think about the basics you'll pay for it on your scorecard. There is something about the fundamentals of your game that you also may not have considered: The game has changed. Your equipment has changed, and so, too, have the methods to wield it. Our all-star collection of Top 100 Teachers have researched the moves you've been using—both the bad and outdated—and replaced them with new and improved ones that will turn your game around in a single practice session. Forget what you know—the New Fundamentals are here. >

FULL SWING **NEW** FUNDAMENTALS**1** How to Aim at Your Target

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**The Old Way**

Aim the clubface at your target and then set your feet perpendicular to the leading edge of the clubface.

**The New Way**

Align your body to your target first and your clubface will automatically point where you want the ball to go. *Follow the steps at right.*

**Why It's Better**

The toe of your clubs rest slightly up at address (more so with your irons), creating an optical illusion that makes you think the clubface is open when it's actually aimed left of your target. **If you set your body to the clubface—as you were always taught—you're setting up left of the target line.** Instead, set your body to your target first and you'll automatically aim the clubface dead-on.



**1** Stand square behind the ball with your shoulders and hips facing the target. Picture a line from the ball to a very precise target, like a specific shingle on a rooftop or a branch on a tree (don't use just a house or a tree).



**2** Pick a blade of grass along your line 6 inches in front of the ball as an intermediate target. Walk out wide to the left so you can approach the ball at a 90-degree angle. As you walk, keep your eyes on the intermediate target.



**3** Step toward the ball. When you're the correct distance from it, draw an imaginary line from your intermediate target to the ball. Arrange your feet parallel to this line about 2 to 3 inches apart.



**4** Take your grip and ground the club. For iron and hybrid shots, a line from the middle of your right foot should go through the back edge of the ball. For woods, a line through the middle of your left foot should go through the middle of the clubhead.



**5** Swivel your head to the left and look at your primary target (that specific shingle or tree branch in the distance) and keep your eyes on it for a few counts. Burn the target into your brain. The more you make this game visual, the easier it becomes.



**6** So far you haven't bent your knees. This keeps your hips and shoulders parallel to each other while you aim the clubface. Now that it's pointed at your target, bend your knees slightly, spread your feet to your preferred stance width, and swing.

**2** How to Shift Your Weight

TOP 100 TEACHER  
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Aviara Golf Academy  
Carlsbad, Calif.

**The Old Way**

Shift your weight to your right side on your backswing.

**The New Way**

Shift nothing.

**Why It's Better**

Weight shift happens by itself. In fact, **if you try to shift you'll more than likely slide your hips away from the target and throw your whole backswing out of whack.** Instead, simply turn your hips to the right. Try and get your right pants pocket behind you but keep the edge of your right hip in the same position it held at address. The key is to pair your hip turn with a shoulder turn that sets your left shoulder above your right foot. That automatically takes care of your weight shift and loads you up powerfully behind the ball.

**How to Practice It**

Take your left hand off the club and set it against the middle of your chest [photo below]. Without any thoughts of "shifting," turn your right hip behind you and your left shoulder away from the target. Check that your left hand is now behind the ball. If it is, your weight—indicated by the center of your chest—is in the right place.



To shift and not slide, turn your right hip (but keep it in the same place it held at address).



**1** Shifting weight means moving your upper body...



**2** ...to the right via hip and shoulder rotation.



PUTTING **NEW** FUNDAMENTALS**7** Grip Your Putter

TOP 100 TEACHER  
**TOM F. STICKNEY II**  
The Club at Cordillera  
Vail, Colo.

**The Old Way**

Putt using the grip that feels the most comfortable to you.

**The New Way**

Use the grip that best takes care of your particular faults.

**Why It's Better**

**We tested the ten most common alternative grips** and discovered that some are better for improving distance control while others are better for directional control. The higher your handicap, the more help you need with distance control—go with a grip that keeps your left wrist from breaking down and changing the shaft angle (which adds or subtracts loft from your putter). If you're a more accomplished player, you probably need to work on fine-tuning your impact position—look for grips that keep the putterface from unduly opening and closing on your forward stroke. In the following tables, the best overall grip for each handicap group is highlighted in yellow.

Results determined using SAM PuttLab and Advanced Motions Measurement's 3D Motion Analysis System.



## INTERLOCKING

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.3° open	-1.6°
10	0.4° closed	+1.2°
18	1.9° closed	+0.8°
25	2.9° open	+0.9°
36	1.8° closed	-0.2°

Best used in the hands of a skilled putter, but provides no additional benefit compared to other grips.



## SPLIT BASEBALL

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.6° open	-2.0°
10	0.5° open	+1.2°
18	1.8° open	+0.2°
25	1.1° open	+1.7°
36	0.7° closed	+4°

A solid option for higher handicaps, but in the hands of a scratch player it will cause putts to dive into the turf and bounce.



## OVERLAP

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.2° open	-1.6°
10	0.3° closed	+1.3°
18	1.1° closed	+0.6°
25	1.3° open	+1.0°
36	1.0° open	-0.1°

Provides a similar feel to the full-swing grip—a comfort to high-handicappers who lose touch when they switch to a new grip on the greens.



## LEFT-HAND LOW

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.4° open	-0.9°
10	0.2° open	+2.0°
18	0.7° closed	+2.4°
25	3.2° open	+0.4°
36	3.3° closed	+2.4°

An effective grip for keeping the putterface pointed at the target through impact. High handicaps might have difficulty adjusting.



## REVERSE OVERLAP

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.5° open	-0.6°
10	0.9° closed	+1.5°
18	2.9° closed	-0.2°
25	2.3° open	+0.5°
36	2.3° closed	+2.1°

A middle-of-the-pack grip for all handicap levels.



## CLAW

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.4° closed	-1.0°
10	0.1° closed	+0.7°
18	1.0° closed	+0.9°
25	2.1° open	-0.7°
36	0.6° closed	+1.6°

Encourages extra shoulder rotation for scratch golfers (closed face), but cures faults typical of mid-range players.



## REVERSE OVERLAP W/EXTENDED FINGER

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.4° open	-2.1°
10	0.5° closed	+1.0°
18	1.7° closed	-0.7°
25	0.7° closed	+1.5°
36	1.8° open	-1.4°

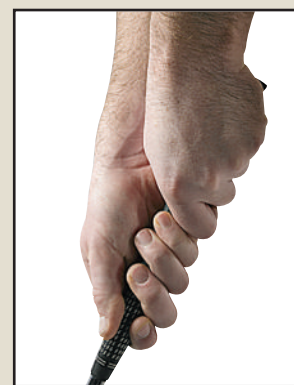
Helps 25-handicappers keep excess hand action in check but with less distance control. Still the best option for this level.



## LANGER

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.1° closed	-1.7°
10	0.5° open	+0.6°
18	2.5° closed	-0.1°
25	3.5° open	+0.9°
36	2.7° open	+0.4°

Another solid option for the 10-handicapper, a player whose primary fault is excess hand action and poor face control.



## BASEBALL

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.8° open	-1.6°
10	0.5° closed	+1.3°
18	1.2° closed	-1.1°
25	2.1° open	+1.2°
36	2.4° open	+1.2°

Provides too much control for the already skilled hands of a scratch player (shaft leaning forward at impact).



## STRONG RIGHT HAND

Handicap	Impact Aim	Impact Loft
Scratch	0.9° open	-1.1°
10	0.3° open	+1.6°
18	2.2° closed	-0.1°
25	1.3° open	+0.9°
36	1.6° closed	-2.5°

Unlike its role in the full swing, a strong right hand position does very little to control putterface position at impact.

**8** Roll It Pure

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Carlsbad, Calif.

**The Old Way**

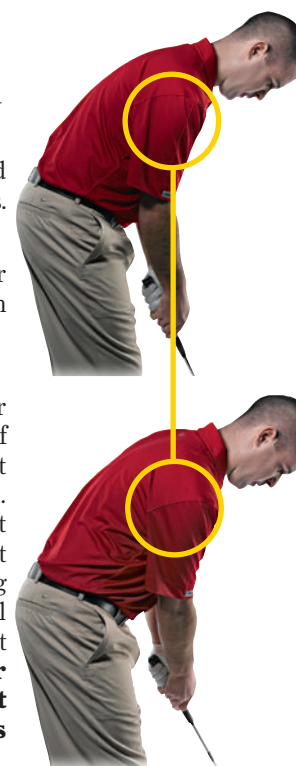
Swing your putter back and through with your shoulders.

**The New Way**

Keep your right shoulder in the same position it was in at address.

**Why It's Better**

Start thinking “shoulder stroke” and you’ll find yourself opening up through impact and cutting across the ball. But if you keep your right shoulder in place, your right forearm and right hand (along with your putterhead) will move straight down the target line. **When you see Tiger putting with just his right hand on the club, he’s ingraining this move.**

**How to Practice It**

Assume your putting address position and then place your left hand on your right shoulder [photo, above left]. Make your stroke and use pressure from your left hand to keep your right shoulder from moving out on your forward stroke. If you do it correctly, you’ll feel like your right shoulder drops slightly toward the ground through impact. Hold your follow-through and put your left hand back on the grip. Remain in this position for a few counts to ingrain the feel of a proper finish.