

# Loosen up

Focusing on a straight left arm and width in your backswing creates tension instead of a power boost. *by Kip Puterbaugh, PGA*

**There's a lot** of information out there about the need to create width in the backswing to produce power. While there's an element of truth to that statement, I'm a firm believer that it doesn't often work for the average amateur golfer.

The main reason is tension – the absolute ruination of a golf swing. If you look into a tour players' behavior – through pre-shot routines and movements over the ball – they're trying to create a rhythm that's free of tension to allow them to create the power and consistency needed to play

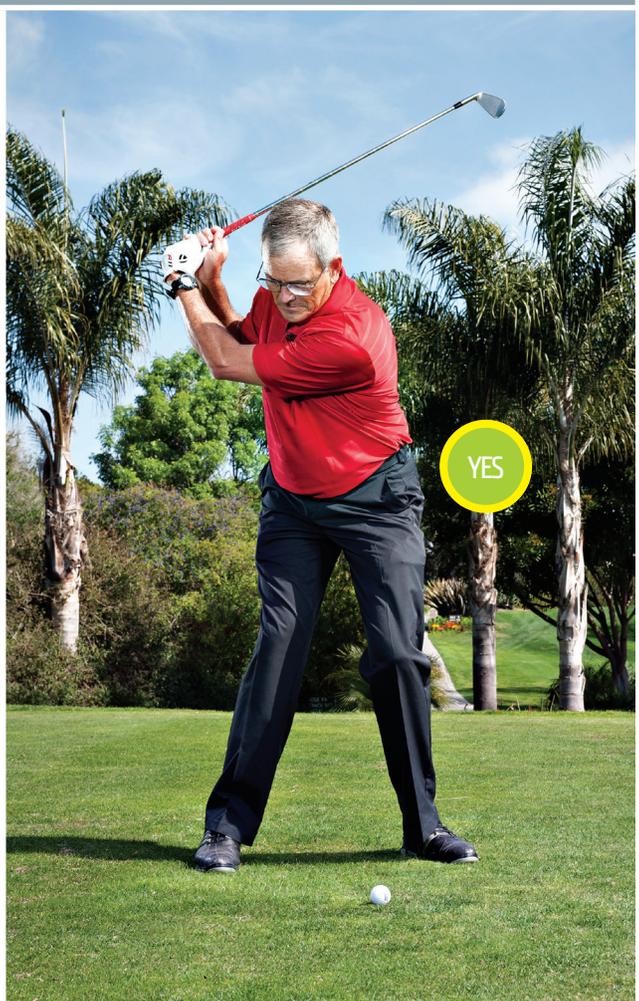
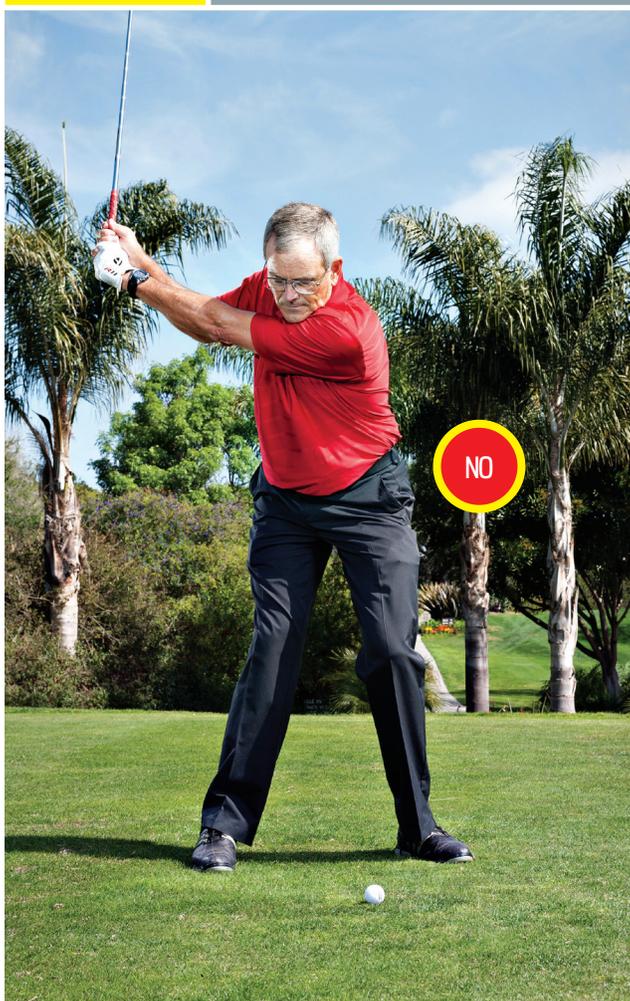
golf at the highest level.

The average player creates tension in their left arm (for right-handed players) in an attempt to keep the arm straight and create a sense of width. But nothing can be created in the "swinging of the club" when you "push" the clubhead out in a false arc with your left arm straight. Think about other sports. Have you ever heard of one where coaches stress the need to tighten a muscle group prior to exertion to enhance performance? Of course not. So why in golf do students stand over the ball with their

left arm so tense and tight there can be no creation of power? The answer is that they've been told to keep their left arm straight and to create width in their backswing.

A slightly bent left arm close to your body doesn't necessarily lead to a lack of power. But it will create less tension, which is what you want. For amateurs, a good pivot and a tension-free motion is much more critical for power than width. **SG**

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