

Building confidence in making solid impact

Peter Croker



I HAVE been presenting a series of step-by-step building blocks of an orthodox golf swing that is "back friendly", delivers good control, and is easy to repeat.

Moving forward, I will consolidate this knowledge into some of our most effective drills that will deliver solid impact and bring real confidence when needed.

The first of these is the Impact Gradient Exercise.

Purpose: To get comfortable with and learn how to execute the impact part of the golf swing flawlessly.

Action Definition of Impact

The clubhead stays on the ball less than one thousandth of a second, but it is unworkable to regard impact as merely this small instant. This results in golfers hitting 'at' the ball and not 'through' the ball. This produces glancing blows and not compressing the ball.

The only really workable viewpoint is to regard impact as the point from when the ball is first contacted until Follow Through. Instead of hitting at the ball, this will result in you hitting through the ball.

It is interesting that what happens after the ball has been struck determines how it will have been struck. If you do not hit through to Follow Through, you will have not first contacted the ball solidly. This is a highly workable viewpoint and definition of impact.

In order to make the above an 'Action Definition', the word Impact is further defined through a brief exercise so that you can get the proper feeling of it. Drill this in until it becomes second nature. This must describe what you are doing and how you feel through impact in all of your shots:

With a 3-iron, set up to a ball at address and place the clubhead directly against the back of the ball. Place all your weight evenly on both feet. The action of your hands pushing the clubhead through the ball will straighten your



right arm and uncock both wrists fully. The right shoulder will move down and the left leg will fully straighten as the left hip rotates anticlockwise.

Press the clubhead forward against the back of the ball. You are driving the clubhead down and out and away of your left shoulder. Your left shoulder is not spinning with the shot. You are attempting to push the ball to the right of the target line. Start very slow, and gradually build up the speed at which you can drive the ball forward. You are attempting to keep the ball against the clubface for as long as possible. You will extend deep into Follow Through.

Your shoulders will remain parallel to the target line throughout this exercise. This is not a flip, and you do not allow yourself to be pulled out of position. You are pushing the clubhead as deep into the shot as you can, while at the same time not holding onto it, but getting rid

of it. It is in this exercise that you are building the feeling of full extension through the "impact zone". The clubhead is being pushed as low to the ground as possible. Your hands do not roll over, they 'uncock' and while the left wrist rotates left to square the clubface to the ball, the right wrist remains bent and in a vertical plane. You will feel the "uncock and lock in" of both wrists and arms -both elbows will be pointing down at their respective hips and the alignment of the clubshaft to the lead arm will result. This is building solid impact.

You are trying to do something that will never happen. You are trying to Push the ball to the right of the target line. The clubface will be rotated through square by the action of the left wrist and the ball will leave the clubface on the intended target line going dead straight.

Work with the above until you really gain a feeling for impact.

Impact (Gradient) Exercise – Extension Step

You can learn anything if you break it down into small enough pieces, where you move at your own pace and gradually acquire personal certainty in the action of hitting a golf ball.

When you work with a short stroke, the impact action is just as it is with a full swing. Once you learn how and get comfortable with the hitting action around impact, your entire stroke becomes far easier to learn and it becomes far easier to drill in consistency with a full swing.

A full swing is just a bunch of activity tacked onto this exact action, with the aim of making this action more powerful. But it is still the same simple action. Remember and apply precisely the 'Action Definition' of impact from the start of this step.

No matter what the length the swing is, you must accelerate through that ball-never decelerate. Begin this exercise with a Pitching Wedge. When you have completed steps A & B-move on to a 9-iron and move through the same steps. In this way, continue on with your 8-, 7- and 6-irons:

A) Hit a ball 3 yards (distance in the air).

B) Gradually increase the distance you hit the ball until your backswing will go back as far as to where your right forearm is parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing.

Get so you can reliably execute impact in this exercise and you will gain a feeling for impact, to build a full swing around! **G**

Peter Croker has been a PGA member since 1971 and has given lessons with his Croker Golf System to professionals including Vijay Singh, Arnold Palmer, Rocco Mediate, Fred Funk, Olin Browne, and Bob Charles. Based at The Dunes Golf Links, he delivers schools, individual lessons, and has an "Online Lesson Program"- www.crokergolfsystem.com Take an Internet Lesson directly from Peter: www.crokergolfsystem.com/Academy/view-your-swing.html You can also contact Peter on 0415 292 549

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