

Golf Lesson: The Mid Irons

I have always liked the medium irons, the four-, five-, and six-, for they are the clubs which come into use so often in tournament play. Also, the five-iron is the dividing iron between the medium and short irons, and it is an excellent club to practice with when learning the iron game. It has just enough loft and distance to enable the beginner to acquire the feel for the entire golf swing.

I've spent hundreds of hours practicing the medium irons, and I feel they are a strong part of my game.

DISTANCE

The medium irons are used for distances up to 170 yards under normal conditions. In other words, you should figure the regular distance for a six-iron to be 150 yards, a five-iron 160 yards, and a four-iron 170 yards. As we pointed out in the chapter on short irons, there is a maximum, medium, and minimum yardage for the medium irons as well as the short irons. Every golfer should have a pretty good idea how much he can get out of each club, and the only way he can find this out is through practice and experimenting with the various clubs.

USING THE MEDIUM IRONS

THE ADDRESS.

The square stance is used for medium-iron shots. Both feet should be on an imaginary line that runs parallel to the line of flight. The weight is equally divided between your two feet, and the ball is positioned slightly left of center between the feet. The upper part of your arms should be in close to your chest, and the right elbow should be relaxed and pointing to your right hip. In this position you are absolutely "square" to the ball, that is, your feet, hips, and shoulders are on a line paralleling the line of flight.

THE BACKSWING.

After settling into your stance and making the minor adjustments of the feet, body, arms, and hands that are necessary to become completely comfortable over the ball, "tune" yourself up for the backswing by wagging several times. Then swing the clubhead away from the ball in a one-piece movement. I have the feeling that my shoulders and the middle part of my arms dominate my backswing. As the shoulders turn away from the ball, the arms simply follow the turn, thus bringing the club-head inside the line of flight.

As the hands reach about belt-high, an upward cocking action of the wrists takes place, moving the clubshaft into a vertical position as the weight is swung to the right side. The right elbow is pointing down and close to the right side at this stage of the swing. The left knee turns in toward the right knee to let the left side turn away from the ball freely.

At the top of the swing, about 85 per cent of your weight should be on your right side. Remember, however, that your weight should be centered on the inside of the right foot and leg, not the outside. The shoulders have turned a full 90 degrees, but the hips have turned only about 45 degrees. This is because you want a little live tension in the left side so it will snap back and lead the left-side action into the start of the downswing.

If the left hip is allowed to turn farther than 45 degrees, the entire swing is thrown out of balance and the tendency is to swing the weight to the out?side of the right foot. An extreme effort must then be made to shift the weight back to the left side on the downswing?quite a physical chore if you are off balance at the top of the swing.

THE DOWNSWING. At the start of the downswing, there is a slight lateral shifting of the weight, initiated by the left hip, to the left side. The left heel is planted firmly on the ground, and the weight is centered in the middle part of your feet and toward the heels. The head is steady and behind the ball. The feeling should be that the head or neck is the axis, or hub, of the swing, and the shoulders are turning around this axis throughout the swing. Do not let the entire body move laterally into the shot. When this happens, the body sets up a blocking action so that the

hands and arms cannot function properly, and a pushed or sliced ball usually results.

Halfway down, the left arm and shoulder have begun to exert a strong pull-down action which generates a little extra clubhead speed. This brings the hands and arms into the hitting area in a fully cocked position. The body and hands are now set for the explosive hitting action through the ball, which is primarily applied by the right forearm and hand.

In one brief instant your hands are behind you, and in another split second they are in front of you, with the right hand turning over the left.

while the arms are fully extended toward the target. The left hip has turned out of the way, yet the head and shoulders are still behind the ball. At this point, the right shoulder begins to pull the head and body into an upright position so that a balanced swing can be completed with a high finish of the hands and arms. Almost all weight should be on the outside of the left foot, and toward the heels, at the finish. If it isn't, you have a balance problem and you should work to correct it. Remember, you should always try to work your weight back in through your heels throughout your swing.

Short note about the author

Andrew Koblick is the owner of <http://my-golf-space.com>. He has posted articles for golf improvement.

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