



THE ABCs OF POWER

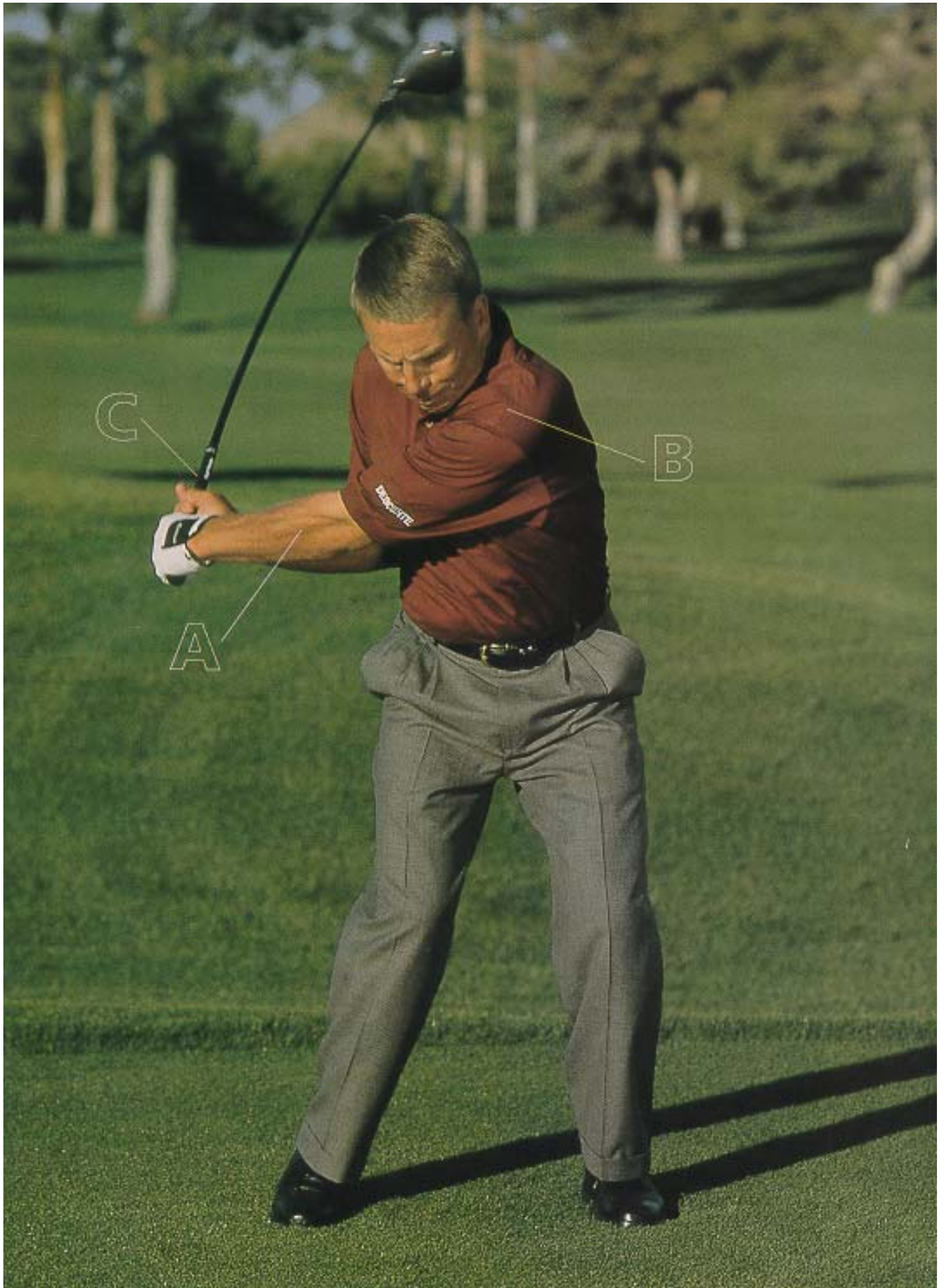
HERE'S HOW TO TRAIN YOUR POWER SOURCES
AND MAXIMIZE DISTANCE

PUT SIMPLY, POWER IS A PROCESS. It doesn't just magically appear at impact when you need it. It's made possible by the set-up, stored in the backswing, and unleashed through the ball. That's the process—no shortcuts.

Unfortunately, most amateurs overlook the first two parts of this equation and instead attempt to create power on the downswing. They either try to apply force with the upper body or else throw the club down with the hands and arms. In truth, these efforts actually reduce power.

First, understand that the golf swing has three power sources: the **arm** swing, the **body** coil, and the **club** lever. I call them the ABCs of power. The secret to maximizing distance is getting into a set-up that encourages these power sources to work and then activating them on the backswing. From there, you have to simply let the downswing undo the backswing, knowing you've done all you could to produce power at impact.

On the following pages, we'll look at how the arms, body and club lever each contribute power in their own way. Then we'll tie them together into a set-up that allows you to maximize the participation of all three. In no time, you'll be consistently hitting longer, stronger shots.



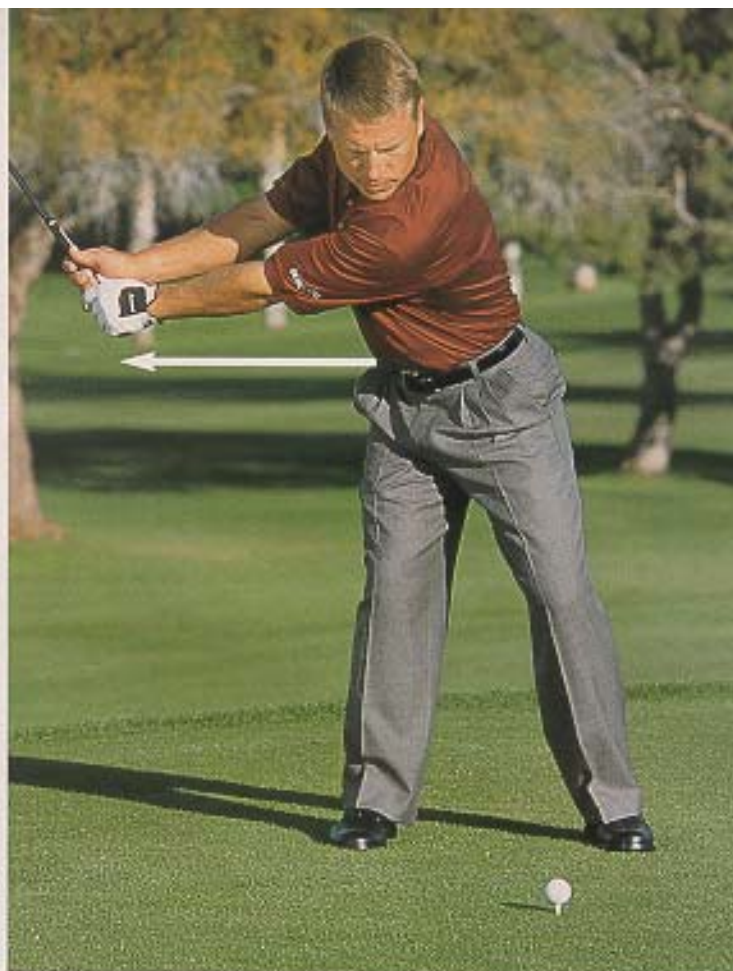


ARM SWING

A wide extension of the arms going back keeps the clubhead low to the ground and along the target line for as long as possible. If you accomplish that, the downswing will tend to take a similar shape, approaching the ball straight-on and at a level angle. The result is a direct, square hit that maximizes energy transfer into the back of the ball.

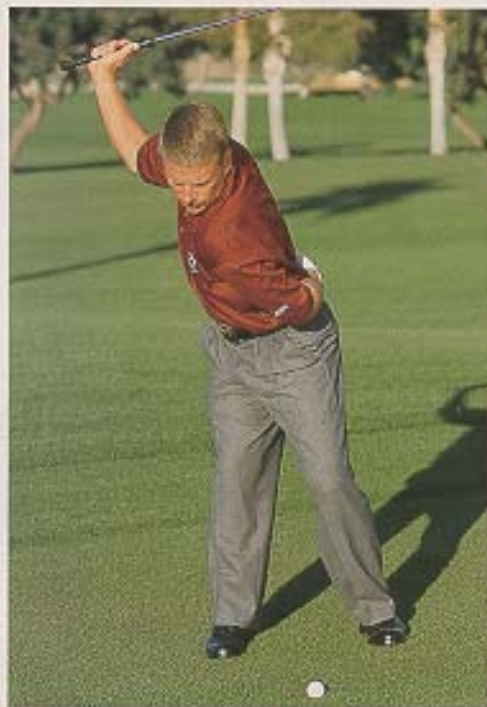
Conversely, folding the arms too quickly creates a steep backswing. Such an abrupt move generally leads to a narrow downswing, making it difficult to swing the club powerfully down the line.

KEY TIP: Swing wide in the takeaway.

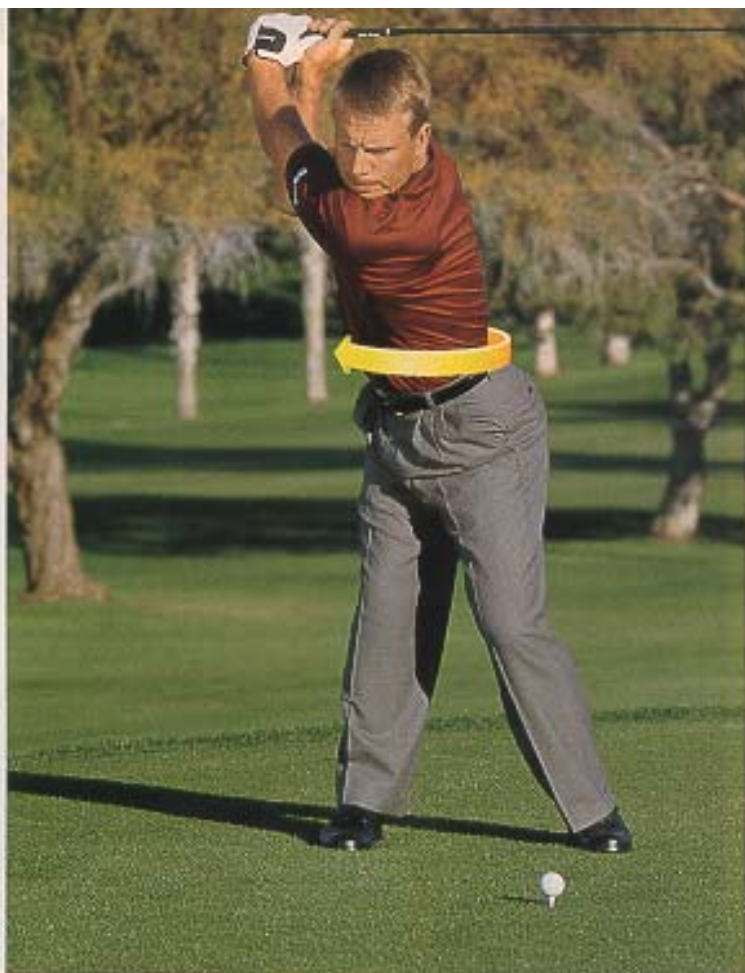


RIGHT-ARM SWINGS

DRILL



A wide backswing is created more by the right arm than the left. If the right arm extends, the left has no choice but to go with it. That said, make some right-arm-only swings, extending the club away from the body going back, then turning the body through, feeling the right elbow drop to the right hip. Strive for these motions in your normal swing and you'll transfer more energy to the ball.



BODY COIL

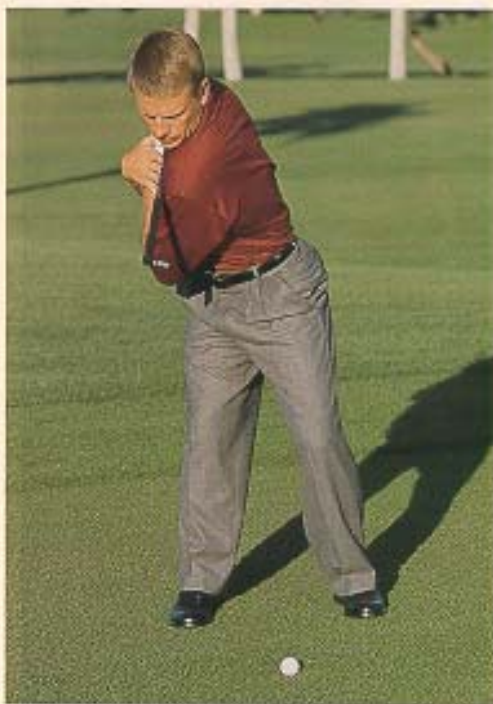
When the upper body turns against the resistance of the lower body, the torso coils like a spring, setting up a powerful uncoiling through impact. The good news is, if you make a wide arm swing, you automatically initiate the coil by pulling the left shoulder into action. As the arm swing continues to wind the body, your weight shifts into the inside of your right leg.

From this coiled position at the top, your first move must be to transfer to your left side. That starts the uncoiling action, which pulls the arms back to the ball. Note the role reversal: The arms pulled the body going back, while the body pulls the arms coming down. If the lower body leads, the clubhead approaches impact on a shallow, inside path, with the body and arms moving together toward the target.

KEY TIP: Coil against lower body.

LEFT OVER RIGHT DRILL

Use this drill to ingrain the feeling of a good coil. Cross your arms, hold a club across your shoulders, and get into your golf posture. Then turn back until the club points out in front of your right foot and your left shoulder is over the inside of your right leg. Note the resistance you feel in your midsection and right knee; that's power behind the ball just waiting to be unleashed.



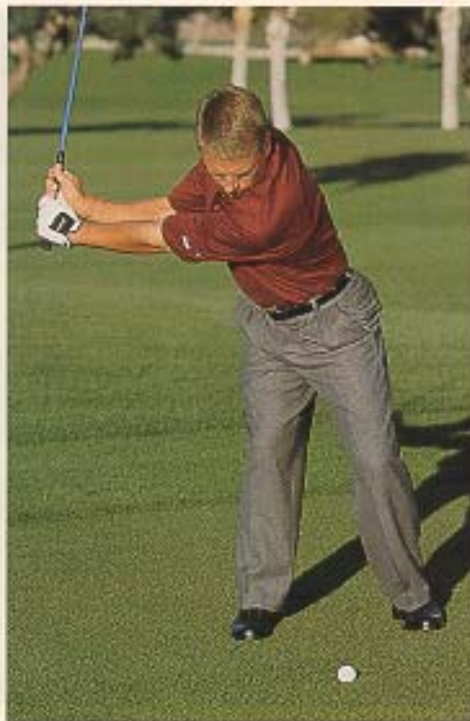
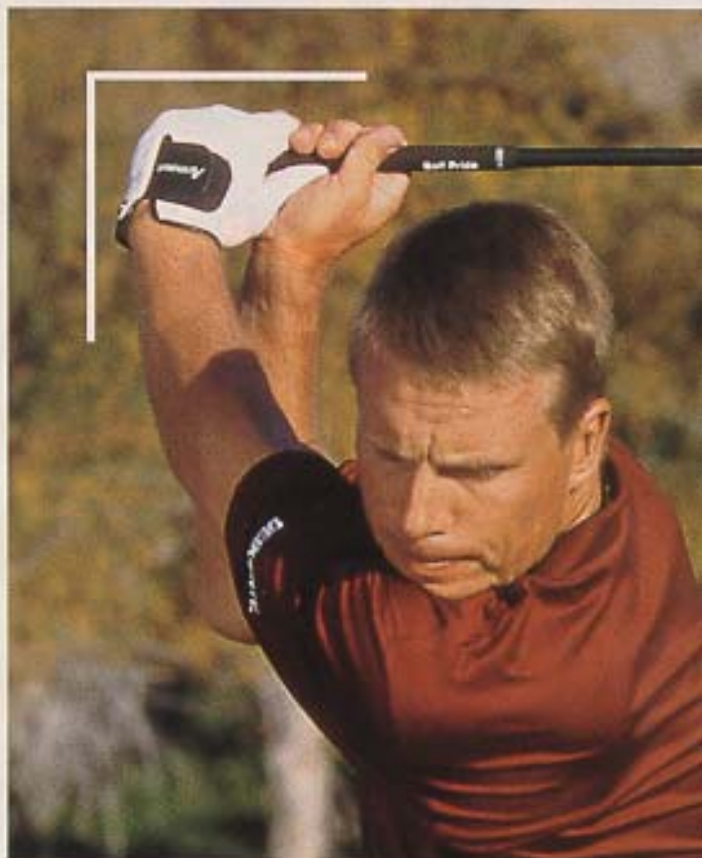


100 YARD CLUB LEVER

Finally, we get to the topic most golfers equate with power: clubhead speed. Granted, a faster swing is a more powerful swing—if it produces solid contact. Without the kind of level strike we've been discussing, the speed you create is not effectively transferred to the ball.

But what is the club lever? When your wrists hinge on the backswing, they take the swing from one lever (clubhead to left shoulder) to two levers (clubhead to hands, hands to left shoulder). This hinge at the wrists creates the club lever and allows you to move the clubhead through a much longer arc and with greater acceleration. If you start with the right grip, the swing's momentum will automatically hinge and unhinge the wrists.

KEY TIP: Leverage starts in the grip.



THUMB THUMBS UP DRILL

For a long arc and extra zip at impact, make sure your wrists are working correctly. Using your 9-iron, hit some balls with half-swings, the hands stopping at chest height back and through. Your wrists should hinge the club 90 degrees on both the backswing and the follow-through. If they don't, see the grip tip on the next page.

POWER SET-UP

ARM SWING To promote a wide swing away from the ball, make sure the club's butt end at address hangs directly below your shoulder sockets. If it does, your body can support a full arm extension while staying in balance. If it doesn't, you're already off balance and a wide swing will serve to exaggerate that fact.

Here's a good set-up thought: Imagine you're holding a dumbbell instead of a golf club. To support its weight, you'd naturally let the dumbbell hang straight down at address; feel like your arms are doing the same.



BODY COIL Many golfers think the shoulders should make a level turn back and through. This is simply not true. They should rotate perpendicular to the spine tilt at address. In other words, if the spine is tilted 35 degrees toward the ball, the shoulders should turn at a 35-degree angle to the ground.

How far forward should you tilt? Until your clubhead touches the ground. Take your posture in three steps: Tilt forward to the ball, place your feet, then set your knee flex by simply unlocking your knees. As a final check, make sure the club's butt end hangs directly below your shoulders.

CLUB LEVER There are two set-up keys to encourage wrist hinge during the swing: a natural grip and light grip pressure. To find your natural grip, place the handle in your left hand while it hangs at your side. Push down with your left thumb to seat the grip in your fingers. Then hinge the club up in front of you and add your right hand, matching your palm to the clubface and setting the grip in your fingers. From there, key on keeping your grip light so the wrists can work naturally.



Todd Sones, a GOLF Magazine Top 100 Teacher, is the principal of Todd Sones Impact Golf Schools at White Deer Run Golf