



## The Setup

The way you set up to hit a golf ball may be the most important factor in determining your score. We don't take that statement lightly. This section will likely be the most important in the entire book. Do not underestimate the importance of the setup! Luckily, the setup is the easiest part of the golf "swing" to change. It's the easiest of all the bad habits related to your golf swing to break because it occurs before the swing. If you set up to the ball in the manner described, your golf swing will change for the better.

You may believe that the way you currently set up to the ball assures a consistent and reliable striking of the golf ball. But, if you have a nagging (or worse yet, unpredictable) slice or hook, hit behind the ball, or even top the ball, the problem may originate in your current setup. If you experience one or more of these problems, there is a high probability that:

- Your setup puts you in a position to allow for these frustrating results, or
- You have, at some point, adjusted your set-up or swing to compensate for the problem, which has done nothing but facilitate a complicated golf swing. A complicated golf swing is the last thing a bogey (or higher) golfer needs.

The process for "setting up" a simple golf swing puts you in a position to go through the five steps of the golf swing, and come back to the starting position with power and control. The combination of power and control is what every golfer strives for, and it all starts with a sound and **repeatable** set-up.

In the beginning, it will take an open mind and some work to get used to this new set up. For some of you, it will be close to the set-up you are currently using. For the rest of you, it will require that you drastically change your set-up. The description will be fairly technical, and it may be difficult to get used to this new set-up routine. However, if you want to succeed, the first thing that you have to do is to be willing to accept change. As stated earlier, the set-up will be one of the most valuable parts of "The Simple Golf Swing" system, so please focus on it.

## The Mechanics of the Setup

Position yourself so that your feet are shoulder width apart. It's fine if you are more comfortable with a slightly more narrow or wide stance. You should be comfortable. For the longer clubs, you may need a wider stance to support yourself, and for the shorter clubs you may want a narrower stance. That's fine too. A stance that is too wide will make it difficult to turn. A stance that's too narrow will result in loss of balance. The width of your stance should not vary by more than the width of your foot in either direction. Feel free to get comfortable, as long as your feet are approximately shoulder-width apart. The toe of your left foot should be pointing straight out, NOT pointing to the left at all. If you angle the toe out, it will prevent you from completing a full shoulder turn.



The ball should be half way between your left and right foot. For simplicity reasons, you should play the ball in the middle of your stance for every shot. Some of the equipment you use may perform better if you play the ball a bit forward or backward in your stance. That's fine, but you shouldn't position the ball more than its' width forward or backward in either direction. With the Simple Golf Swing process you will soon be learning, positioning the ball in the middle of your stance should be best for every shot to begin with. Once you master the Simple Golf Swing, you may wish to experiment by moving the ball off-center by as much as one ball width toward your trailing foot for the shortest irons and as much as one ball width toward your leading foot for long irons. **For now, however, place the ball in the middle of your stance as shown below!**



Position the golf ball in the manner previously described, then stand straight up. Your knees are not locked, but they are close to locked. Your back is perfectly straight. Your chest should be out. It won't feel right to have your back straight and chest protruding. It will look and feel "exaggerated", but that is alright. It is supposed to feel like that, when you first adopt this new setup. Your spine has to remain straight throughout the swing. It is most important that your spine remain straight during the setup and throughout the swing. Your spine will be acting as the axis for your swing.



For a moment, I want you to imagine something rotating around a bent axis. A tire, for example, turning about a bent axle...How would you describe the pattern regarding how that tire was rotating? Complex? Unpredictable? It would be really difficult to steer a car down a straight line on a bent axle wouldn't it? Bent axles are worthless, and so is your swing if your back isn't perfectly straight. Similarly, it is difficult to "steer" a golf ball along a predictable path when the axis about which your swing rotates is not straight. You must eliminate the curvature in your spine (back) if you ever hope to strike the ball with precision and power. It is impossible to overemphasize this point.

Now, focus on a straight back and spine, which allows for a very predictable, smooth, and consistent path of the club head. This will be the core of your new golf swing. Your whole swing will rotate around a straight spine. This is an extremely important and valuable new concept! Luckily, it is one of the easiest to apply and remember. Right now, even if you were to use your old swing to hit a few balls, remembering to keep your spine perfectly straight throughout the swing, you would see and feel immediate results. If you were not to see immediate results at the practice range using the "spine as axis" approach, you would definitely see results after applying the proper set-up and the Simple Golf Swing process.



Next, hold the club out straight in front of you. Extend your arms as far as they can extend out in front of your body. You are holding the club, with the correct grip, straight out in front of you. Now, while keeping the club parallel to the ground, arms extended and elbows locked, move the club and your arms down so the club is even with your belly button or waist. Your wrists will have to bend slightly to do this.

Now, you should be standing up straight, with your chest out, and your shoulders back. Your arms should be straight out in front of you, your elbows locked, and your wrists level with the height of your waist, while holding the club parallel to the ground. Next, bend over **AT THE HIPS** until the club touches the ground. Move towards or away from the ball according to where the club touches the ground.

After some practice, you will be able to judge the distance well enough so that you don't have to move around to get into position. Keep your chest out and straight while bending over at the hips. It is impossible to overstate the importance of this...You should not be bending with the back at all to reach down to the ball; you should be bending **AT THE HIPS**. This is one of the most common mistakes made by amateur golfers. If you look at any professional golfer on the tour, they will **ALWAYS** have a straight back, and they will **ALWAYS** bend at the hips to get to the ball.



You will feel like your “seat” is protruding backwards more than usual. That is what we want here... Also, it’s okay if the toe of your club is not flush with the ground. It **should** be that way, especially for the long irons.

*As you can see in the image to the right, the back remains straight while bending over to the ball. All of the bending is done at the hips. Bending at the hips and keeping a straight back will promote great ball flight and consistency. The relationship between the arms and chest has not changed.*



*This is the final setup position. The back is still straight. All you need to do is bend at the hips until the club touches the ground. As you can see, the arms are still stretched out, and the hands are at waist level. They seem lower, but the relationship between the arms and chest has not changed. Your legs remain in a fixed position, while you move the arms and chest together to the ball. This is the key to a good, simple setup.*





Now you are in a position to hit a golf ball straight and consistently down the middle. Every time you hit a golf ball, go through this set-up drill. It will become easier each time you hit a ball. It will soon become a habitual routine that you go through on the course as well as the range. More importantly, it will give you confidence, knowing that you are in the right position to make solid contact with the ball every time.

Now hit a few balls after going through this set up routine **for each ball**. Get used to it for a few days and then we'll move on to the Simple Golf Swing. Congratulations, the hardest part is over. We realize that may be difficult to believe.

\* Just a quick word on the driver. Woods are designed differently than irons. With an iron, you should essentially be hitting "down" on the ball. That's not really the case with the woods, so it may cause problems if you set up to the ball in exactly the fashion that I described above. Here's the solution.

First, get in to your normal setup position, as I describe above. You've got the driver in hand, you're bent over at the hips, you're back is perfectly straight, and you're ready to take a good swing. Now, all you have to do is stand up a bit straighter. You should have already determined the correct distance between your feet and the ball. You just stand up a bit more straight, and reach out with you arms to bring the head of the driver back to the ball.

You will need to experiment with the amount that you need to adjust (it shouldn't be much). Your chest may move about 1 - 3 inches. It doesn't seem like very much, but the change will be very noticeable. Just remember that nothing else in your swing or setup changes. Your lower body doesn't adjust because you have already determined the correct distance between your feet and the ball. It's just a matter of standing up a bit straighter, and then reaching out a bit more with the arms to compensate.

After we get through the remaining sections, you will understand that this will change your swing plane a bit. Your swing plane will become more horizontal, the straighter you stand up. Please realize that nothing else should change. You will swing each of your clubs in exactly the same fashion (found below). This repositioning at setup will have a huge effect on the outcome of your shot, so please take some time to see where you are the most comfortable.