

LEARN TO PLAY SIMPLY GREAT GOLF!

Chapter 4: The Simplest, Most Effective Pitching and Full Swings

By PGA Professional, Mike Passmore

Simply Great Golf Academy, Possum Trot Golf Club, N. Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

This chapter of Learn to Play Simply Great Golf will give you a description of the best pitching and full swing techniques used by the best golfers and how you can adopt these techniques.

I have studied the pitching to full swing motions of hundreds of the best golfers and it is clear that “swinging” is the dominant motion that produces the best golf shots most consistently. It’s not a secret but there are very few golfers that know that their foremost thought for making a good golf shot should be to focus on making a swinging motion. Swinging is also the simplest and most repeatable motion.

Unfortunately, most golfers are more naturally “hitters” than swingers which is why golf can be frustrating. The two main reasons we are naturally hitters is simple – we have a club in our hands and we are going to hit something with it and secondly, most of us learned the hitting/thrusting motion first from baseball.

My main job is to educate my students about the golf swinging motion and then give them the training approach and guidance to help them develop their swinging motion and tame their “hitting impulse”. It takes patience and perseverance to achieve the swinging motion consistently which is why the top golfers spend a lot of time practicing.

The basic pitching swing is a shorter version of the full swing. The best approach to developing your full swing motion is to develop your pitching swing first.

The swinging motion for pitching to full swings generally consists of coordinating two parts – THE SWINGING LEVER and THE BODY/TORSO ROTATION.

THE SWINGING LEVER part consists of your shoulders, arms, hands, wrists and golf club. It is a fluid swinging, rotating and hinging motion that functions properly with rhythmic, swinging arms and by maintaining the proper tension level of your arms and hands (just enough tension to support the club when the shaft is at horizontal). The swing of your arms and club together initiate your golf swing, not your hands or body/torso.

THE BODY/TORSO ROTATION part consists of your upper and lower body/torso. Think of your upper body as the main part as your swinging lever is connected to it and your upper body moves almost twice as much as your lower body. Think of your lower body (hips, legs and feet) as the steady base of your swinging motion that engages your upper body rotation and moves responsively to it.

The Body/Torso Rotation engages your Swinging Lever at the beginning of your swing and leads your Swinging Lever in your “down-swing” and “through swing”. A generalization is that you “swing and turn, then turn and swing”.

COORDINATE THE SWINGING LEVER and THE BODY ROTATION by focusing on “Swinging and Turning” simultaneously and rhythmically.

Begin by practicing your long pitching swing motion with a wedge. Make a swing so that your hands reach chest level in both your “backswing” and at the finish. Once you feel you have the proper coordination of the swinging motion, work on developing your full swing by increasing your swing and turn to the point of making a full body rotation (which is rotating your body as much as you can in your back swing without excessively moving your head or moving “off center”).

THE “BACK SWING” - The swing of your arms and club should lead your upper torso rotation and your wrists should hinge gradually from the upward momentum of the club head weight with the proper light tension level of your hands (not by using your hands to hinge your wrists). Your hips should gradually rotate as well and your weight should gradually transfer into your right leg and foot as your lower body engages your upper body rotation.

In general, you are swinging, rotating and hinging. Make sure to focus on a ball or point on the ground or floor to keep your head steady and maintain your “swing center”.

THE “DOWN & THROUGH SWING” – Your Body Rotation should initiate the swing of your arms and club both down and through. Your left side body (knee, hip and shoulder) should lead your “quiet” arms and hands down with your wrists staying hinged or cocked until your hands reach hip level. (The club head weight pulling down on the end of the shaft keeps the wrists cocked until the hands reach hip level where the shaft would be at a 45 degree angle).

Your hands at hip level is the “release point” in the golf swing where the club head weight downward momentum begins un-cocking your wrists and your right side body begins turning into the ball and through to the target along with the swing of your arms and club. Your weight is gradually transferring into your left leg and foot.

Chapter 5 of Learn to Play Simply Great Golf will make you aware of The Do’s and Don’ts of Golf Instruction and How to Solve Your Most Common Flaws.

Mike Passmore has achieved a ranking of 2006 Top 6 PGA Instructor in the U.S. and he is a 3-Time PGA Section Teacher of the Year