



# Train it so you can trust it

Understanding your tendencies will help you get off the tee and onto the fairway. BY SEAN LANYI, PGA

**Every player strives** to hit his drives farther and straighter. To do this consistently, players of all skill levels should follow a few basic tips.

**Tension** – How many times have you stood over your tee shot and found yourself gripping the life out of your club? Probably more than you would like to admit.

Tension restricts speed; to reduce tension, follow these steps. Begin your pre-shot routine by taking a few deep breaths as you make practice swings with your club; be sure you have the grip in your fingers and not in your palms.

This will allow your body to be more supple and relaxed, allowing for maximized speed while you create a free-flowing motion. The slow breathing will help to reduce your overall

tension, and the small movements will loosen up your hands, wrists and arms.

Reduced tension also will allow your body to rotate more freely and fire at the ball with greater speed and consistency.

**Speed** – Take a few practice swings and notice where you hear a “whoosh.” The sound should be heard at the bottom of your swing or forward of where the golf ball would be. Continue to take focused practice swings until you can create the speed through the ball versus at the ball.

**Aim and Direction** – Play the shot that you brought to the course. Regardless of your desire to hit a draw, if you show up to the range to warm up and you are consistently hitting a fade, do not attempt to fix that while you play.

For right-handers, to hit a fade, tee up on the right side of the tee box and aim down the left side of the hole. To hit a draw, use the left side of the tee box and aim down the right side of the hole.

This will give you a better angle in anticipation of hitting your shot, allowing for the curvature; we all know it’s easier to score from the short grass than from the rough—or worse.

If you combine these tips, gain a better understanding of your tendencies and learn to manage your tee shots, you should see an increase in distance and in the number of fairways hit. **SG**

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