

SHORT GAME - BACKSWING TECHNIQUE

Ryan Rinneard — June 2, 2022

If you have not familiarized yourself with the lead up article, [7 KEYS TO A BETTER SHORT GAME](#), please do so prior to focussing on your technique. The proper setup is a non-negotiable requirement for the steps that follow.

Finesse Wedge Fundamental No. 2

SWING THE CLUB ON PLANE WITH AN OPEN CLUBFACE

The single most important factor to ensuring you get the club back to the ball efficiently is to make sure you swing the club **on plane** in both your backswing and your downswing.

For our purposes, I have added a ruler to the images in the article with the corresponding lie angle of the wedge that I happen to be using ([Vokey SM9 58 Degree](#)). This angle represents your swing plane that happens to be same as the lie angle that your club sits at (in this case, 64 degrees). It is simply the angle between the shaft and the ground.



In your takeaway, your hands should travel on a certain path that allows you to swing the club head back on the proper plane, as you can see in the image below:



Notice in the pictures that the hands and the club head stay very close to the line (ruler) from the start of the takeaway to the point where the club is horizontal to the ground and how the club head rotates open to the point at which the toe of the club is pointing toward the sky. **This is not a manipulated movement**, meaning there is no intentional rotation of the club head - it is happening because of the setup position, and specifically due to the cupping of the lead wrist.

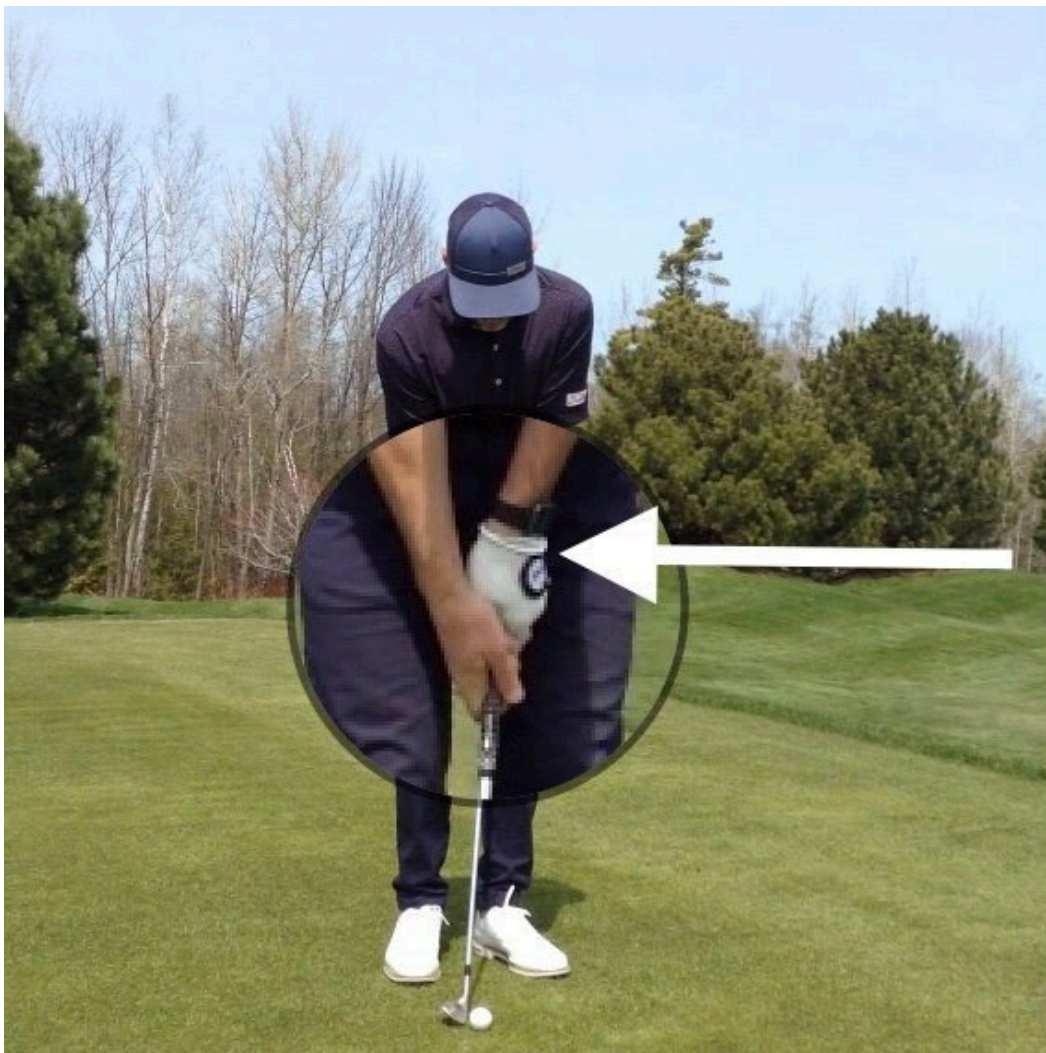
This open club face, combined with an on-plane swing will allow you to correctly release the club through the ball and allow you to better use the bounce of the club as it was intended.

Be Aware of What Your Arms Are Doing

In order to make the proper backswing, you'll need two key components working in tandem:

1. The cupping of your lead wrist
2. The behaviour of your trail arm

If you followed along with the key setup fundamentals, you will have established a “cupping” of your lead wrist at address.



In order to maintain an open club face that is on plane, this wrist angle is very important. Any bowing of that wrist angle throughout your backswing will lead to either a closing club face or an under plane swing, or both. Maintain the cupping in the lead wrist throughout your swing. Try doing so while doing the Single Arm Drill below (Step 1).

While your lead arm stays cupped, your trail arm remains close to your body and folds at the elbow as you externally rotate your arm. While this may sound complicated, there is a simple drill you can do to learn this. (See Step 2 below)

The Single Arm Drill

This is a great drill to practice in front of a full length mirror.

Step 1: Stand in your *finesse swing* address position, without a ball. With your trail hand rested on your trail hip, grip the club in your lead hand and make sure it's in a bowed position. Swing the club straight back and up as you would in your regular short swing (upper body should rotate slightly as well). Pay close attention to your lead wrist. It should not bow or straighten, but rather maintain the cupped position.



Step 2: Go back to your *finesse swing* address position. Now with your lead hand on your lead hip, hold the club in your trail hand. Keep your elbow close to your side. Start your backswing as you would with a small upper body rotation and let your trail arm externally rotate while swinging your hands and club up the swing plane.



If these concepts seem a little complicated, seek the help of a PGA Professional who specializes in the short game who can observe your movements and give you simple feedback to help you improve.

The other way to do this is in a full-length mirror. Set up (without a ball) with a mirror to the right of you for the down-the-line angle and turn your head toward the mirror. If you take the club back properly, pay close attention to the point where the club shaft is parallel to the floor. At this key checkpoint in the swing,

as the club is horizontal to the floor/ground, it should point straight at your target (imagine a laser shooting out of the grip end of the club), with the toe to the sky, and the clubbed hiding your hands.

If you have any questions about the content you have read here, please reach out to [ME](#) and we would be happy to further assist you on your journey to better golf.

Thank you for reading,

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