

POWER PLAY

Longing for more distance?
Check out these tips to become the
driving force in your foursome

There's nothing more fun (that's fit for print) on a golf course than watching a tee shot soar majestically through the air and land in the fairway. When everything syncs up it's a beautiful thing. But if your drives haven't been a pretty picture lately, fear not, help is near. It could come in the form of drills, new equipment, altering your swing speed, hitting the ball

in the middle of the clubface or putting less backspin on the ball.

Whew! That's a lot to digest, so we've broken it down into more manageable nuggets of advice from some area teaching professionals. Pick one or two that will work for you and start launching the ball past your playing partners. And wouldn't that be a sight to see?

FIND YOUR GROOVE



The key to more distance is a well-sequenced swing, faster clubhead speed and a solid hit in the middle of the clubface. Instead of accelerating the club too

fast from the top of the backswing, feel like you pause at the top and gradually accelerate the forward swing through to the finish position. Try to feel like the fastest point of the swing is past the ball; this will ensure that you sequence the downswing with the lower body first, then the thorax, lead arm and club. That's the same sequencing used by the longest hitters on tour.

Chris Mayson

*Director of Instruction
Maderas Golf Academy*

GET FIT



The best way to hit it farther is to maximize your equipment by getting fitted. The design of the clubhead in combination with the shaft can change your distance by up to 15 percent, and the center gravity combined with the loft will alter your ball flight. There's no club and shaft combination for everyone because all drivers are different. Once you get your custom-fit driver take it back to the fitter and get tested again because you want to make sure what you tested and received are the same. Do your research and test as many products as you can before making your final decision, because it's a big one.

Scott Heyn

*PGA General Manager
Black Gold Golf Club*

MAKE SOME NOISE



The key to increasing distance off the tee is to have your clubhead travel faster. A drill to help with this is to take your grip at the other end of the club and begin swinging back and forth to create a whoosh at what would be the impact position. The louder you make the whoosh, the more you'll increase clubhead speed. By practicing this drill your clubhead will accelerate faster through impact and your golf ball will fly farther.

Tony Schumacher, PGA
GolfTEC Center Manager

CENTER CUT



The only way to guarantee more distance is by consistently hitting drives in the center of the clubface, but it's an often overlooked key to improving your driving statistics. With the advances in driver technology, having a driver custom fit by your local PGA golf professional or certified specialist is essential in attaining the desired ball flight to maximize distance. The next time you're at the practice tee focus on feeling the ball compress against the sweet spot and exploding off the face. In the end, the more drives you hit square, the more distance you'll gain off the tee.

Greg Wagner
*Apprentice Golf Professional
Sandpiper Golf Club*

STAY IN SEQUENCE



To hit longer drives you must maximize your launch angle and minimize your back and side spin. Follow these steps:

- Set up with the ball off the instep of your forward foot and tee it up a little higher than normal. Then create a spine tilt away from the

ball, with your back hip and shoulder lower than your forward hip and shoulder.

- Keep your pressure light to maximize club head speed.
- Take the clubhead back slowly on your backswing and swing aggressively through impact.
- Keep your arms in front of you on the downswing. Stay in sequence.
- Release the club and let your forearms roll over as you turn your shoulders through impact.

Eric Lohman, PGA General Manager
Monarch Beach Golf Links

KEEP YOUR BALANCE



There are two requirements for more distance off the tee: solid contact and fast swing speed. It doesn't do much good, however, to swing fast if you mishit the ball, so your first priority is to have good posture at setup and maintain your balance throughout the swing. A good drill is

to take your driver and flip it so you're gripping it near the clubhead and swinging the grip end. Make a big turn back, swing and try to make a swoosh sound with the grip. If you make the sound louder with each swing it will teach you to swing the club faster, but don't forget to maintain your balance throughout the motion.

Mitch Lowe
*2011 Northern California PGA Player of the Year
Stanford Golf Course*

GET IT TOGETHER



There are three factors to consider when looking for more distance off the tee. The first and easiest is to get fitted on a launch monitor that tests drivers and shaft combinations for optimum launch angle and spin rate. Next, use impact tape to see where the ball is hitting the clubface. Typically 10 percent of distance is lost on off-center hits. The final thing to check is your clubhead speed. To increase it, work on the core muscles that produce the power that leads to more speed.

Michelle Dubé
*LPGA Master Teaching Professional
Tijeras Creek Golf Club*

A DIFFERENT SPIN



There are a lot of tips for getting more distance off the tee but you're leaving yardage on the table if you're not playing the right equipment combination. Getting your launch conditions dialed in properly is imperative for maximizing distance and improving accuracy. As a general rule, the harder you hit the ball the more important it is to get your spin rate optimized. If you swing slower, optimizing your initial launch angle becomes more important. Many golfers generate too much backspin because of poor equipment or lack of fitting. Take advantage of physics by finding a good fitter with a launch monitor and start smashing it without having to make any swing changes.

Marty Jertson
*2011 Southwest PGA Player of the Year
Senior Design Engineer II, PING Golf*

STAY RELAXED



The key ingredient to hitting the ball farther off the tee is speed, but most players try to overpower the game of golf and aren't sure what parts of the body to use to create more speed. What you need to focus on is upper body speed, which is rotational and includes your core, chest and shoulders. Players who try to swing hard create tension in the trunk, which is why it moves incredibly slow and kills overall body speed. If the upper body stays relaxed it can reach the speed it needs for the arms not to take over the motion. This ensures less or no breakdowns from the lead wrist.

Kris Brown
*Director of Instruction
Trump National Golf Club, Los Angeles*