

Peter Thompson

“The Golf Expert”

More Myths that can Paralyse your Game

Having the shaft parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing is one of the most damaging myths in the game and can easily paralyse the entire movement of the backswing.



PGA Fellow Professional

Peter Thompson is a Fellow of the Professional Golfers Association

® The Crest is a registered trademark of The Professional Golfers Association

Copyright © 2009 Jurassic Coast Publishing & Peter Thompson Golf

Copyright © 2009 Jurassic Coast Publishing & Peter Thompson Golf

Copyright © 2009 Jurassic Coast Publishing & Peter Thompson Golf

All rights reserved

The right of Peter Thompson to be identified as the author of this work has been asserted
by him in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988

First Published in Great Britain in 2009 by Jurassic Coast Publishing Ltd

This edition published in Great Britain in 2009 by Jurassic Coast Publishing Ltd

www.jurassiccoast.com

More Myths That Can Paralyse Your Game

I have been professionally assisting golfers to improve their golf game now since 1963. The more I have learned about the game; the more I have realized the importance of what not to do. One should focus on what to do in all walks of life including playing golf.

However, if any golfer attempting to improve their backswing has in mind that the shaft has to be parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing then immense problems will occur.

Having the shaft parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing is one of the most damaging myths in the game and can easily paralyse the entire movement of the backswing.

Picture 1 shows one of the finest golfers who has ever lived. His name is Byron Nelson from Texas in the USA. In 1945 he won **11** tournaments in succession and had a stroke-average of 68.33 shots per round. The only golfer with a lower stroke average in one year has been Tiger Woods with an average of 67.79 shots in 2000.



Byron Nelson was so good at playing golf that he retired from the professional scene when he was 33 years old. Byron Nelson did not have the shaft parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing.

Picture 2 shows Ernie Els, one of the most-liked and respected golfers in the world today. Ernie has won many tournaments around the world and everyone admires his silky smooth golf swing. I took this photograph myself at the 2004 Masters when I was a guest of one of my pupils, Gary Wolstenholme who had won The Amateur Championship the year before.

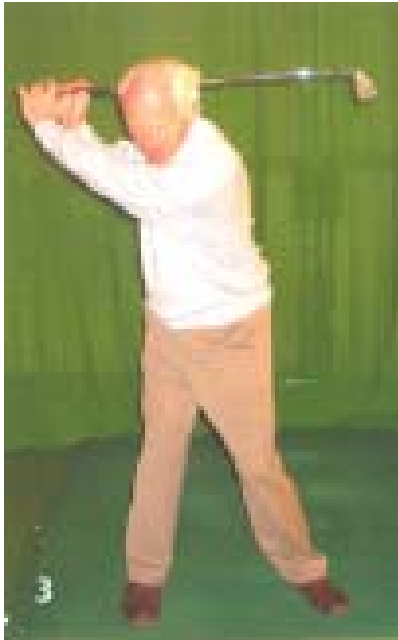


Even though these two photographs of two superb backswings were taken approximately 60 years apart the shaft angles and body positions are virtually identical. Whilst the basic human body shape remains the same, all good golfers will retain the same characteristics.

If it was vitally important to have the shaft parallel at the top of the backswing why do these two superb golfers not achieve it? The answer is that it is a myth. There is absolutely no reason why the shaft should be parallel at the top of the backswing.

There are golfers who may well have the shaft parallel and many who go way beyond parallel like John Daly, the winner of two Major Championships, but it is not a prerequisite of a good golf swing. There can be a difference of up to 90 degrees in the way different golfers can hinge their wrists and this one fact alone should make it obvious that a 'one swing fits all' approach is doomed to fail.

Picture 3 shows me letting go of the club so the club is parallel to the ground



Picture 4 shows me hinging my wrists a little less than normal.



It is quite wrong to artificially attempt to move the shaft back to parallel, even if it is physically impossible to achieve this. My lowest gross score has been 66 and my handicap was + 1 when I was 17-years-old, and to my knowledge, I have never been able to or wanted to take the club back to parallel.

The club needs to be taken back in plane/on line but only as far as you are physically able to. Forget parallel and just take the club back as far as you feel comfortable. In the summer the club in your hands will automatically go back a certain distance. In the winter the same club, with you wearing several layers of clothes will go back less far.

Some days you will feel very flexible and other days feel less flexible. So again the same club will be taken back different distances. All you need to do is adjust to the different distances rather striving to take club back artificially to parallel. Take the club back only as far as you comfortably can whilst retaining full control.

Peter Says:

“Many of my pupils have benefited from understanding that Having the shaft parallel to the ground at the top of the backswing is one of the most damaging myths in the game”



Conclusion

Instructions that insist that the club should be parallel at the top of the backswing are not based on reality and they are therefore myths.