

More myths that can paralyse your game

“The Golf Expert”

Peter Thompson

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Take the Club Head back low to the ground! I Have heard this more times than I care to remember, in that the club head should be taken back low to the ground. This is what I believed and what I have now discovered!



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Take the Club Head Back Low to the Ground.

I HAVE heard more times than I care to remember, that the club head should be taken back low to the ground. Indeed; I used to teach this very concept about 40 years ago. I was then an aspiring golfer and teacher who thought he knew everything there was to know about the golf swing.

I had read many times and I am sure you, the reader has also read that the club head must go back low to the ground to create a wide arc and a great extension.

This almost makes sense until we examine the facts. My facts are based on how the best golfers in the world actually play golf, rather than how they are supposed to play golf.

Researchers at Stanford University in California have proved that the longest hitters turn their hips an average of 56 degrees in the back swing. This is considerably more than golfers who hit the ball less far. The hip turn creates club head speed and it is the speed of the club head at impact that creates distance.

If you address a golf ball and turn your hips, the club head will automatically move away in an arc and move upwards. To attempt to move the club head back low to the ground will result in a hip sway to the right and a loss of balance that will not be recaptured in the rest of the swing.

If the club head is taken back low to the ground at what point does it start to move upwards and round ?

I have asked this question to scores of golfers and golf coaches and no-one has ever given me a sensible and factual answer.

What really happens to the club head is this. The hips and shoulders turn immediately, so do the arms and hands, therefore the club head also moves round in an arc. The wrists are hinged at address and continue to hinge so the club head is moved upwards.

Picture 1 shows Eric Cross, one of my pupils who had a gross 65 net 59 in winning a medal at Canford Magna Golf Club in Dorset. This was the best score of his life and created a new course record. The photograph is of Eric's address position.



Picture 2 shows Eric midway into his back swing with his left arm more or less parallel to the ground. The club head is level with the spotlights in my studio. These spotlights are nine feet above the ground. If the club head had been taken back low to the ground how did the club head move to nine feet above the ground.

The answer is the body turned, the wrists hinged and the club head could not move back low to the ground.

Visible proof of what happens in a good swing is one of my favourite teaching methods.

One of the ways to see what happens to the club head is to take up your normal address position and without moving your arms or turning your hips and chest hinge your wrists and see how far above the ground the club head has moved.

With a normal wrist hinge the club head will now be opposite your head.

If you now lift your arms so your hands are opposite your head, then the club head will be approximately three feet above your head.

If you then turn your hips and chest as far as is comfortable the club head will move even further above your head.

These three movements happen in all good golf swings but not in that sequence as the three movements are all happening at the same time.

The reason for the exercise is to understand that at no point in the swing does the club head move back low to the ground.

Picture 3 shows Ross Fisher, a much respected European Tour professional in an excellent address position.



Picture 4 shows Ross nearing the completion of his backswing with the club head at least nine feet above the ground and approximately five feet away from the target line.

This is an excellent position and it could not have been achieved with the club head moving back low to the ground.

CONCLUSION

Taking the club head back low to the ground is an immensely damaging myth. If you are instructed to do so, ask to see the backswing of any good golfer and you see the club head moving away from the ground immediately.

