

## GOLF WITH RODGER DAVIS



# GET A GRIP

Get a handle on your clubs and you will be a fair way towards developing a solid technique.

● The secret to a good golf game is to keep it simple and always have the same approach to playing a shot. The four important aspects to get right are how you grip the club, how you address the ball, your posture, and the first part of your swing, known as the takeaway.

In this issue, we cover the correct grip. In the coming weeks, we'll look at the remaining three aspects, how they influence your game and how to link them together into a routine.

Even professionals can succumb to pressure. If the time you take over a shot blows out from 15 seconds to 30 seconds, that's an extra 15 seconds for you to think about the bunkers or water hazards. However, if you apply the same routine to every shot you play, you will reduce the pressure.

If you watch past greats such as Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson, or the current crop such as Pete Ellis and Tiger Woods, the routine never changes – whether it is Watson in eight seconds or Nicklaus in 15 seconds, it does not vary.

This brings us to the grip.

The grip is the hardest part of the approach to change. If it has to change, it must be done slowly, over time. If you move from an incorrect grip to the proper grip overnight, your game will suffer.

The most common grip used by professionals is the Vardon or overlapping grip, named after the great Harry Vardon. The two middle fingers of the left hand should just touch the pad or the muscle near the thumb to give the correct sizing (picture 1).

Then position the left thumb correctly (pictures 2 and 3). You have now created two Vs. One is the left thumb and the other is between the thumb and index finger of the right hand. Both Vs should run in the same direction – between the right side of your chin and right shoulder (picture 4). This will never change no matter what shot you play.

A benefit here is that the left thumb stops you over-swinging when the club reaches the top of the backswing. If the

### BRW WORLD CORPORATE GOLF CHALLENGE

Rodger Davis is event ambassador for the BRW World Corporate Golf Challenge. Winners of the state finals will progress to the Australian final at Twin Waters Golf Club on the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, next April. Davis will then accompany the winning team to South Africa to act as coach and mentor in the world final in May next year. To enter a team or for more details, go to [BRW.com.au](http://BRW.com.au).



thumb position is not correct, the club can drop at the top of the backswing and you will get into all sorts of trouble.

Next is the grip pressure. The club should be gripped quite lightly. When you coil to the top of the backswing and uncoil to hit the ball, there is a natural increase of pressure in the grip. If the grip pressure is too tight, the natural increase cannot happen, which will affect both rhythm and time.

Remember, if your V positions are incorrect, the changes you make should be done with slight movements over a period of time, possibly months.

Once the grip is right, all shots are a lot easier to play. The left thumb (picture 3) is in a neutral or square position, so the club face will be square when delivered back to the ball – in theory.

If you move the left thumb slightly to the left with the V still running between the chin and right shoulder, the club face will be slightly open when it makes contact with the ball. This produces a fade, which starts left and

then curves to the right. Use it when a direct shot at your target is blocked.

The reverse is a draw or hook, which starts right and then curves to the left. To play a draw, move your left thumb slightly to the right and the club face will close.

Use the same grip for both shots – it's just a small change in the position of the left thumb.

Now we have to link your grip into your routine. If we look at Nicklaus – or even Woods, who is a Nicklaus devotee – the routine is very simple.

When Nicklaus stands behind the ball, he pictures the target where he wants the ball to finish. This can be a tree, bunker or even the flag. He then looks down as he approaches the ball to make sure his left thumb is set in the correct position.

By taking this position, both Vs will be running in the same direction when the right hand goes on – the perfect position to hit the shot to the spot already targeted from behind the ball. **BRW.** With Damon Frith