

GOLF WITH RODGER DAVIS



STEP UP, FLY RIGHT

Vary that stance to play the shot you want – this is the take-home lesson in the third instalment of a four-part series leading up to the BRW World Corporate Golf Challenge.

● Posture is a vital element of the routine we are building to improve your golf game for life. Posture positions you in relation to the ball and gives you your stance. It is your posture that will shift in relation to the ball to allow for different shots to be played.

When you address the ball, the club goes in first and the feet second, as outlined in the second instalment of our four-part series ('The right approach', *BRW*, November 19).

Now it is time to set your posture and adjust your width of stance, to decide the right positioning of your left foot in relation to the ball, and to work out how far away from the ball you should stand.

As you approach the ball, your left foot moves into position just behind it. As the pictures show, you can maintain the position of your left foot in relation to the ball no matter what stance you take.

Stance is important. In the past, players maintained the same stance and moved their position to the ball to initiate different shots. Now, the left foot takes the same position in relation to the ball and the length of the shaft determines how far back the right foot goes (picture 1).

For instance, when using a wedge, you take a narrower stance than for a driver. The stance you take for a wedge will likely be the width of your shoulders, and it will be a bit wider for a driver.

This brings us to how far you should be from the ball. If you place the club first and feet second, notice there is a hand span from the top of the grip to the body (pictures 2 and 3). This never changes. It doesn't matter if you're using a driver or a seven iron. You take the same position.

The only thing that changes is the distance of the ball from your body. This is determined by the length of the shaft.

Posture is also where we start working on different shots like fades, draws and whether we want them to go high or low.

First, we have to look at why we play them. In most professional tournaments, fairways are 20 to 25 metres wide. If it is

25 metres wide and you're trying to hit a straight shot down the middle, you have an error margin of 12.5 metres on either side. However, if you can aim down the left hand side of the fairway and hit a fade, or the right hand side and hit a draw, you now have 25 metres of error. So all of a sudden you have the entire width of the fairway in your error margin.

And now how do we play shots? As outlined in the first instalment ('Get a grip' *BRW*, November 12), the club face always points to where we want the ball to finish. If the left thumb is in the correct position, your body will be square in relation to the club face, so you get a straight shot.

If you move your left thumb slightly to the left so the club face is open, you will get a slight fade. So your body has to be aimed about 10 metres left of the target.

Your body determines where you want the ball to start its trajectory. The club face decides where you want it to finish. Set up the grip as though hitting a straight shot, then open the club face to hit a fade. You will find you don't change your swing, grip or any part of the routine in switching between a fade and a draw. You just make a slight modification in body alignment and the position of your left thumb.

In the posture position, we have the right alignment set-up and therefore the ball will always be in the same position. The only time this varies is when we want to adjust trajectory. When hitting into a strong breeze, we may want a lower trajectory. Or if there is a breeze at our backs, we may want a higher one.

To adjust trajectory, move your body forward in relation to the ball by about 2.5 centimetres, but no more, to shift the trajectory of the ball slightly higher. And move back by only the same distance to shift it slightly lower.

The fun of golf starts on the practice fairway where we can mix it all together and hit high fades and low draws. You will eventually find the straight shot is the hardest to hit. **BRW.**

With Damon Frith



BRW WORLD CORPORATE GOLF CHALLENGE

Rodger Davis is event ambassador for the *BRW* World Corporate Golf Challenge. Winners of the state finals will move on 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.