

{ COVER FEATURE }

BYE BYE SLICE

It's weak, nasty and robs us of better scores. Send your slice packing for good, by **Gareth Johnston**

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{GAME}

**SLICE CURE
FIND YOUR
FAULT... AND
FIX IT!**

WHICH SLICER ARE YOU?

A slice occurs when the clubface is open to the path of the club – the direction the clubhead is travelling as it strikes the ball. Ball flights will vary but they will always move excessively from left-to-right and finish right of target (for a right-hander). It's extremely important to

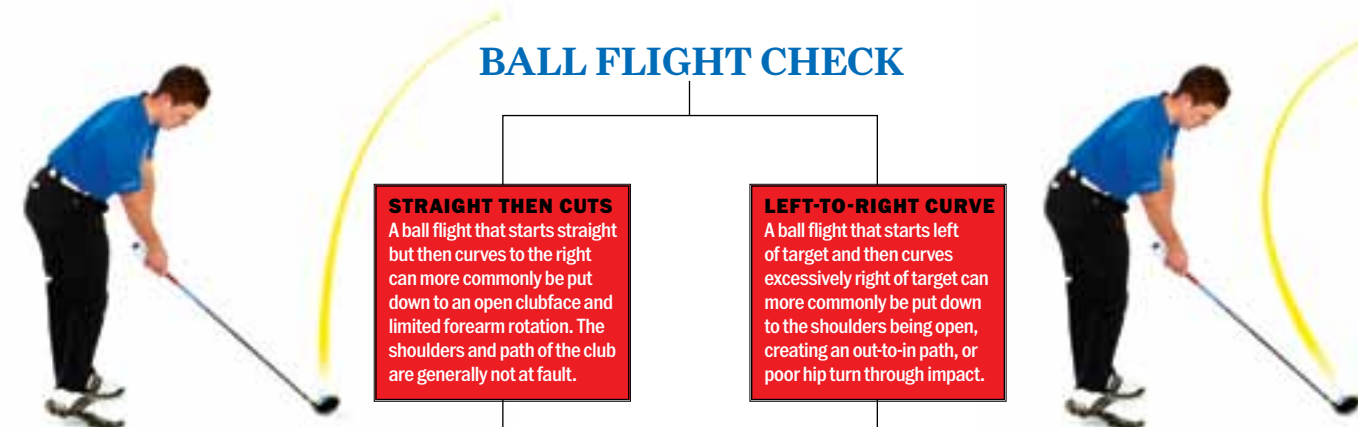
understand that there are many components in the set-up and/or the swing that can cause a slice. You may have just one or a combination of two, three or even more! The causes in the flowchart below that are attributed to your particular ball flight only TEND to create this shape. There are

other fundamental faults associated with the address position: grip, clubface alignment, head position (all covered in this feature) that can cause the slice, either on their own or in combination with others.

Remember also to check your alignment as a possible slice

cause. Golfers often aim left and swing the club across the line without realising it to bring the ball back to the target, which doesn't get to the true cause of this weak flight. Going through the process below will help you get to the root of your slice – the first step to fixing it.

BALL FLIGHT CHECK



CLUBFACE FAULT



RIGHT ARM UNDERNEATH
The face is open due to the right wrist sitting more underneath the handle rather than rotating the face. Turn to page 34 to deal with this problem.

FOREARM FAULT



HOLDING THE FACE OPEN
The face stays open through impact when the forearms don't rotate. For the correct positioning and rotation of the arms, turn to page 39.

SHOULDER FAULT



SHOULDER FORWARD
When the right shoulder moves out in the downswing, the clubhead usually goes with it. Delaying the right shoulder starting down fixes this. See page 30.

HIP FAULT



POOR HIP TURN
Limited hip turn through impact limits your ability to square the face, often leaving the face open resulting in a slice. To cure this fault, turn to page 36.

TRY THIS DRILL



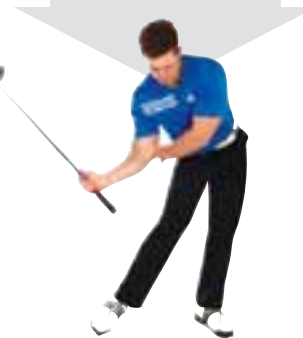
The right hand tennis drill promotes face rotation. Read more on page 35.

TRY THIS DRILL



The left-over-right drill (p39) limits hip action but encourages wrist action.

TRY THIS DRILL



The one-hand resistance drill is an effective slice fix. Read more on page 32.

TRY THIS DRILL



This drill with two stickers on your left leg (page 36) will improve hip action.

Cause 1 The grip

A SLICE CAN OFTEN BE TRACED BACK TO A POOR HOLD

The frustrating thing about the slice, or many other faults for that matter, is that you could get almost everything right – swing plane, club path, shoulder turn – but if the grip is wrong, the release of the club is hindered and

you're hitting wayward shots with what feels like the perfect golf swing. Positioning both hands on the club correctly reduces the margin for error when we strike the ball. Don't let your grip let you down again.

FAULT



LONG LEFT THUMB
This hinders the ability of the wrists to hinge in the backswing and throughswing limiting the rotation of the forearms.

FAULT TWO



STRONG RIGHT, WEAK LEFT
A common grip among slicers, clubface rotation is limited with this combination of a strong right hand and weak left hand.

FIX



ALIGN THE CREASES
A neutral grip gets the creases formed by the thumb and forefinger on both hands pointing to the right shoulder.

WEAK LEFT HAND

This promotes the clubface to remain open by inhibiting the ability of the wrists to rotate through impact and release the club correctly. The left thumb should run vertically just right of the centre of the handle.

Cause 2 Shoulders

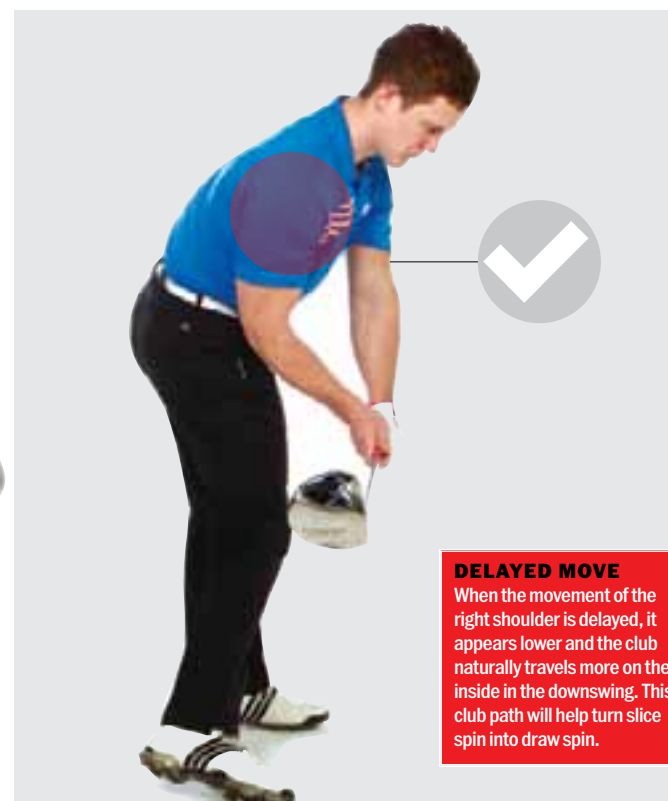
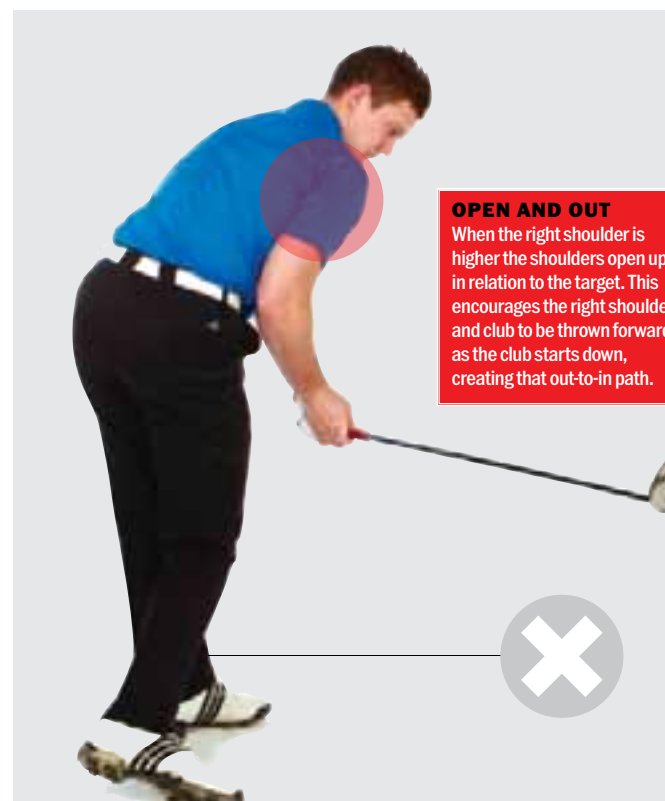
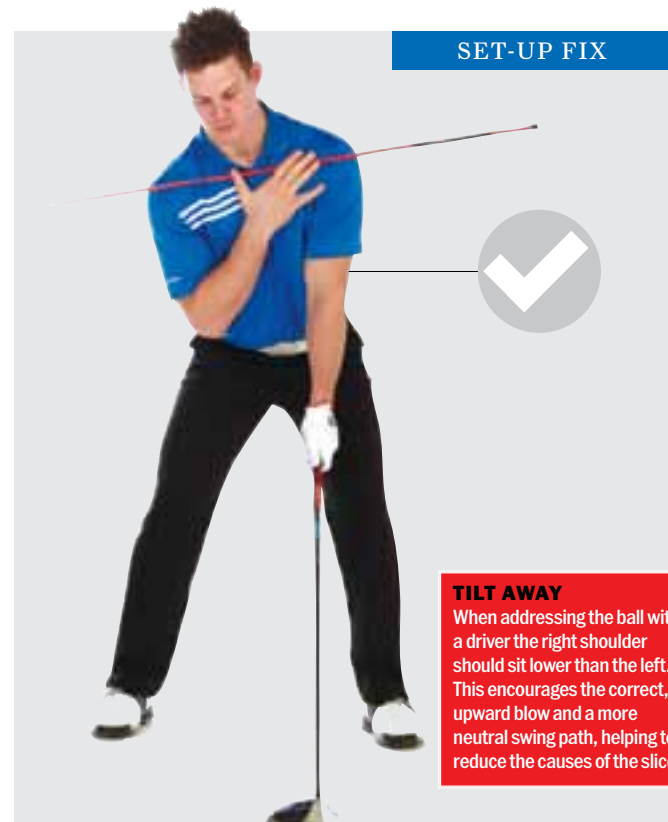
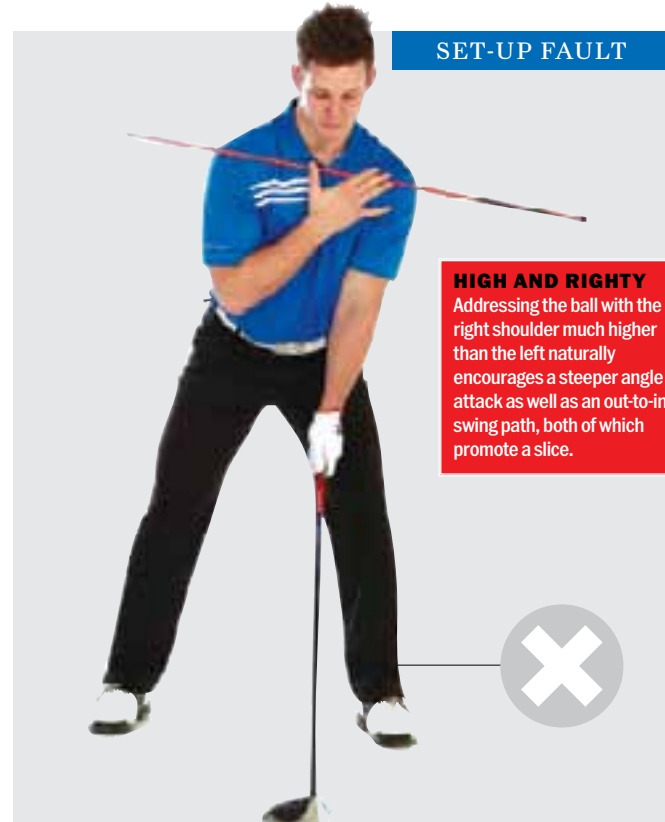
THE CORRECT POSITION AND MOVEMENT OF THE RIGHT SHOULDER IS KEY TO STOPPING THE SLICE

Incorrect shoulder alignment at address or movement during the swing is probably the number one cause of the slice among club golfers. The shoulders are so

influential because they control the path of the club. So at the point of impact your clubface may be square, but if your path is from out-to-in, the result is a glancing

blow. And the more out-to-in your path with a square clubface is, the more your ball will curve to the right in the air. Many amateur golfers will throw all they've got at

the ball to try and gain maximum distance. But technique usually suffers as a result. Make sure your shoulder action isn't to blame for your slice with these tips.



SHOULDER MOVE DROP THE RIGHT, DON'T SPIN THE LEFT



CLUB PATH DRILL HOW TO CREATE AN IN-TO-OUT ATTACK



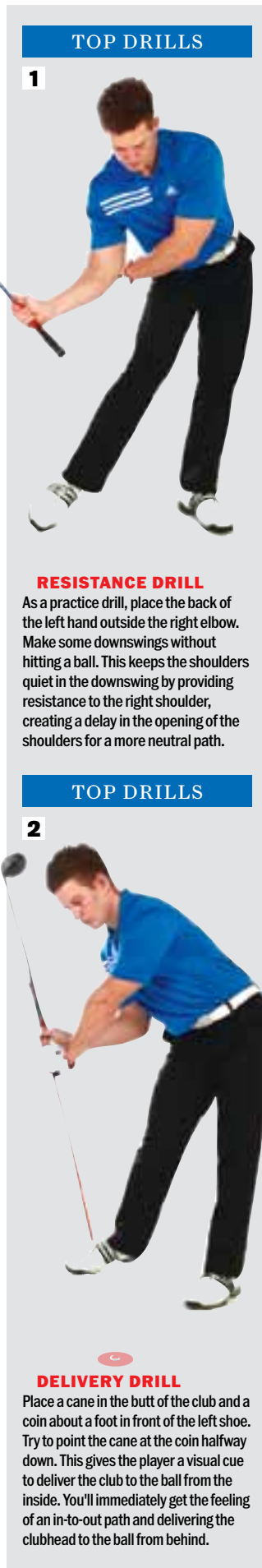


BACK TO TARGET
When you reach the top of the swing with 90° of shoulder turn, feel that your back faces the target. Poor shoulder alignment and tilt at address limits the amount of turn you can create.

STAY FACING BACK
As you start your downswing, feel that your back stays pointing at the target for a moment as the arms swing down. This delays the opening of the shoulders, improving the swing path into impact.

LEFT KNEE SUPPORTS
Feel your left knee remains in a strong and stabilising position at the top; if it collapses in towards the right knee it can pitch your weight forward – leading to a reverse pivot and an out-to-in attack.

2



TOP DRILLS

1

RESISTANCE DRILL
As a practice drill, place the back of the left hand outside the right elbow. Make some downswings without hitting a ball. This keeps the shoulders quiet in the downswing by providing resistance to the right shoulder, creating a delay in the opening of the shoulders for a more neutral path.

TOP DRILLS

2

DELIVERY DRILL
Place a cane in the butt of the club and a coin about a foot in front of the left shoe. Try to point the cane at the coin halfway down. This gives the player a visual cue to deliver the club to the ball from the inside. You'll immediately get the feeling of an in-to-out path and delivering the clubhead to the ball from behind.

Cause 3 Head position

KEEP YOUR HEAD BEHIND THE BALL WITH THE DRIVER TO SQUARE THE CLUBFACE CONSISTENTLY

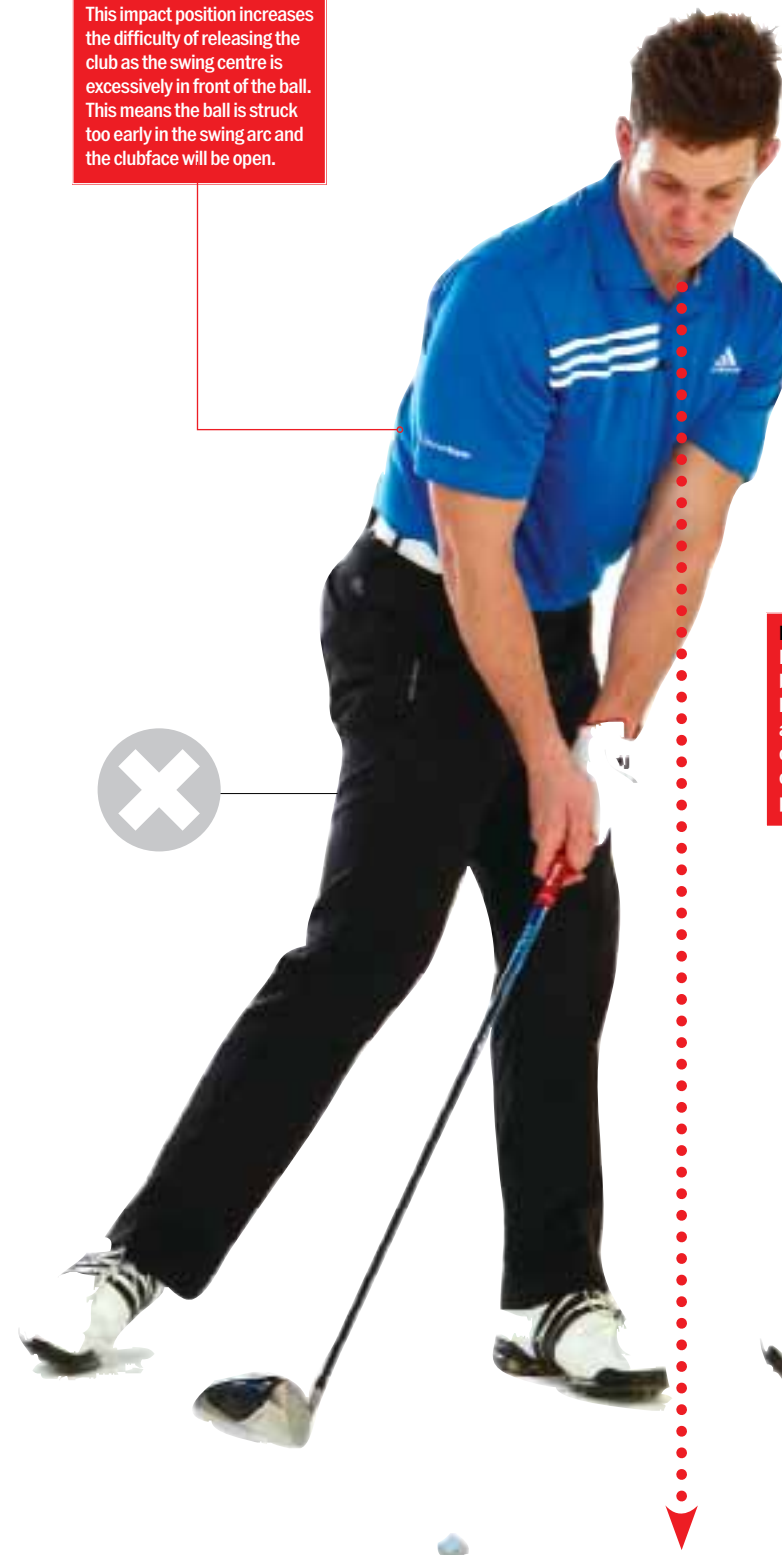
The position of your head in relation to the ball varies as the club gets shorter in your hand but with the driver, your head should always be behind the ball

from the address right through the swing. Your head is an extension of your centre point. With a driver, the centre point should be behind the ball as we

want to strike the ball with an ascending blow. We do this by ensuring the bottom of our swing arc, which is always directly below our centre point, occurs

behind the ball. If our weight shifts excessively into our left side at impact, our head can often follow suit. The result? You guessed it, a horrid slice!

HEAD AHEAD
This impact position increases the difficulty of releasing the club as the swing centre is excessively in front of the ball. This means the ball is struck too early in the swing arc and the clubface will be open.



HEAD STAYS BEHIND
Having the head slightly behind the ball at impact helps release the club by allowing the arms, hands and clubface to catch up in the correct sequence prior to the point of impact.



Cause 4 Clubface alignment

A FACE THAT'S OPEN TO THE SWINGPATH WILL CAUSE A SLICE. KEEP IT SQUARE WITH THESE TIPS

The angle of the clubface is one of the key ingredients in determining the ball flight of your shots. The more neutral you can get your clubface throughout

the swing, the lower the risk of you hitting a slice. To hit a shot with no curvature at all, the clubface must be perpendicular to the swing path at the point of

impact. If the clubface is either open or closed to the path of the club then sidespin will occur. Setting up with a clubface that is open or closed at address hinders

your ability to square the clubface at impact as you'll have to manipulate the clubface, which saps power and often results in uncontrollable sidespin.

POOR STRIKES

When the clubhead comes into the ball on a steep angle of attack or when the face is closed at address, this forces the player to open the face at impact, leading to weak, poorly-timed slice shots.

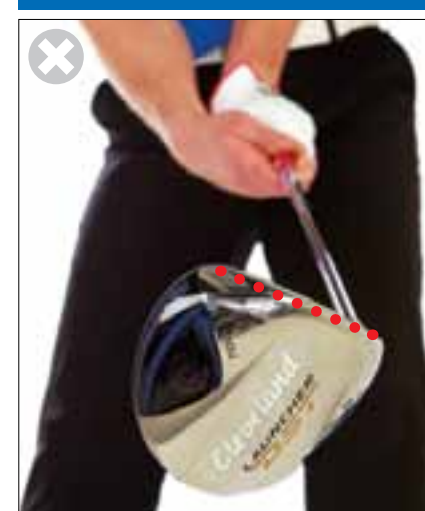
LOW APPROACH

A square clubface at impact with a vertical shaft will strike the ball on an upward path. With a cane behind the ball on the target line, the goal is for the driver head to get as close to the cane as possible.

LOG ON TO THE TG WEBSITE FOR MORE TIPS ON THE SWING



OPEN CLUBFACE



LATE RELEASE

When the right hand moves more underneath the handle at impact, notice how this encourages the clubface to open. Your swing path may be good, but with an open clubface the ball will slice!

CLOSED CLUBFACE



EARLY RELEASE

When the club is released too early or the right wrist climbs on top of the handle, the clubface closes meaning the body has to compensate through impact, resulting in inconsistency.

NEUTRAL CLUBFACE



CORRECT RELEASE

A good clubface position at impact is where the clubface has started to rotate from open to closed pre-impact but is square at the point of striking the ball. With a good club path, the shot will fly straight!

CLUBFACE CHECK OPEN AT THE TOP OFTEN MEANS OPEN AT IMPACT!



AVOID 'CUPPED'

Check your position at the top of the swing. A cupped left wrist with the clubface vertical means the face is open. This increases the potential for sidespin to be applied to the ball.

FOREARM MATCH

When the club is in a neutral position at the top of the swing, the left wrist should almost be flat and the angle of the clubface should match that of the left forearm. This increases the chance of a square hit.

TENNIS DRILL TURN SLICE SPIN INTO DRAW SPIN



USE A TENNIS ACTION

A good feeling to incorporate in your golf swing is that of a forehand topspin shot in tennis. During this action, the racket moves from low to high and the racket face rotates dramatically from open to closed to create topspin.

RIGHT HAND ON TOP

Notice how the right hand and forearm sits on top of the racket grip after the ball is struck and the arm is fully extended towards the target. The theory applies to the driver too, helping square the face.

TENNIS DRILL



FLAT WRIST DRILL

Just like in a tennis backhand topspin shot, the left wrist should be flat coming into impact with an exaggerated feeling of the clubface closing. This drill provides a positive clubface improvement.

HAND CHECK



SLAP THE TARGET

Notice how in the finish position, the back of the left wrist points down the target line. The same is true in the golf swing; the position reveals rotation of the left forearm through impact.

CRAZY DRILL



DRILL FOR THE BRAVE

Open the clubface by a few degrees at address and try to hit it straight by releasing the clubhead, creating forearm and clubface rotation. This will improve timing and clubhead speed.

Cause 5 Hip action

TURN YOUR SLICE INTO A DRAW WITH THE CORRECT HIP ROTATION THROUGH IMPACT

Hip rotation is an essential body release method that creates the correct sequence of movements in the downswing, which ultimately control the path of the club and

the squaring of the clubface, assuming the basic set-up fundamentals like grip, alignment and face aim are applied. If the hips clear correctly

then the clubface should follow suit and approach the ball on a neutral path. Problems occur when the hips either fail to clear or clear too quickly, too early.

Both of these instances in the golf swing increase the chances of hitting a slice dramatically. Get your hip action spot-on with this advice below.



STICKER DRILL

The weight needs to sink into the left hip and outside of the left foot through impact. Place a sticker on the back of the left knee and hip. From this angle, the stickers should be visible at impact, not set-up.

NO SHOW

When there is insufficient weight transfer into the outside of the left foot into impact, the stickers aren't visible from down the line. Poor hip action results in issues with club path.

STRAIGHT LEG



HIP TO TARGET DRILL

Place a sticker on your right pocket. Feel that this moves towards the target into impact. When the left leg straightens correctly, the sticker should be visible from this angle. Use a mirror or window to help.

HIP FAULT



WEIGHT STAYS BACK FAULT

We will deal with weight shift next, but if the weight fails to get forward – here, the back foot is still flat on the floor – the correct hip rotation is much harder to achieve. Weight must move forward for the hips to turn.

HIP FIX



FORM A STRAIGHT LINE

Feel that the left shoulder, hip, knee and ankle form a line at impact. This promotes weight transfer into the left side and good hip rotation through impact, improving body sequence and promoting face rotation.

Cause 6 Weight transfer

CURE YOUR SLICE AND ADD MORE POWER IN THE PROCESS

Weight transfer in the golf swing allows the player to cover the ball correctly optimizing the launch conditions. Like in any sport involving power, weight

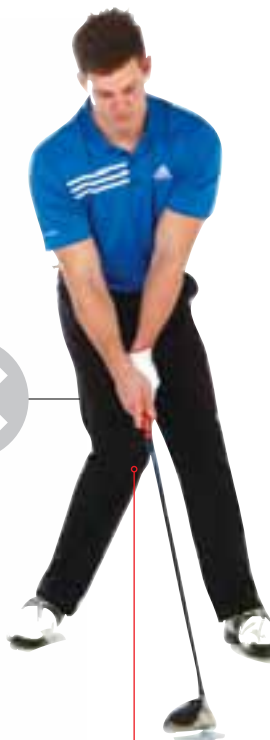
transfer generates momentum and distance. If the weight hangs back and doesn't shift as you strike the ball the body has to make last-minute adjustments to

the clubhead in an attempt to start the ball down the target line. Unfortunately, this results in a weak, glancing blow for 95 per cent of club golfers.



BEGIN WITH A BUMP

Position a cane outside the left hip in your address position. Feel that the first move of the downswing is a bump of the hip towards the cane. This encourages the weight to transfer to the left side.



SLICE PATH CAUSE

Notice how when the left hip hangs back behind the ball, the weight stays back on the right side. This affects the path of the club coming into impact; the club will be more likely to come from out-to-in.

COIN DRILL



WEIGHT TRANSFER DRILL

As a drill, place a coin under the left big toe. Feel that as you strike the ball you show the coin by lifting the big toe. This indicates the weight has been shifted correctly into the outside of the left foot.

TRAINING AIDS TO CURE YOUR SLICE

Sort your slice another way using these training aids that offer a temporary fix to your wayward problems.

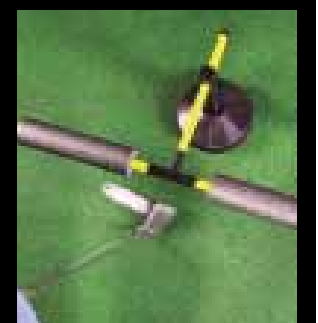
FOREARM ROTATION



IMPACT BALL

Develops feel with no mechanical thoughts. It helps you feel the correct rotation of the forearms through impact whilst keeping the elbows compact. £31.95, www.perfectmygolf.co.uk

SWING PATH



SLICE ELIMINATOR

The adjustable guide pads encourage a correct in-to-in golf swing path for straight shots, and give immediate feedback on an out-to-in swing path. £29.95, www.perfectmygolf.co.uk

SWING PATH



T2HOLE SLICE STOPPER

Place the ball 2-3 inches away from the bristles and make a swing trying to follow the arc in the bristles on your takeaway and downswing. £24.99, www.perfectmygolf.co.uk

Cause 7 Forearm rotation

RELEASE THE CLUB CORRECTLY WITH ROTATION OF THE FOREARMS AND CLUBFACE

Contrary to popular belief, it's the forearms that control the clubface, not the wrists. Hold a club in one hand, holding the wrist with your other hand. Now rotate the

clubface. You'll discover it's impossible for the wrists to move independently of the forearms in a rotary movement. The wrists are able to hinge up and down. In

fact, that's all the wrists do in a good golf swing. Forearm rotation, then, is a crucial action when squaring the clubface at impact consistently. It's this rotation of the

forearms and therefore the clubface from open to closed through impact that creates draw spin. Limited rotation increases the potential for sidespin.



CLUB EXTENSION
Feeling that you extend the club low and long down the target line after impact will help the right hand rotate over the left and turn the clubface from open to closed for straighter shots.

POWER CUT
When golfers try and hold the face open, notice the increase in separation between the elbows. The left elbow breaks down and club moves from out-to-in, often resulting in a low-power slice.

ROTATION DRILL STATIC HIPS ENCOURAGE FOREARM ROTATION



ROTATION DRILL
A good practice drill to promote forearm rotation is to hit some short pitch shots with the left leg crossed over the right leg. You'll feel it's easier to turn in the backswing, but harder through the ball.

STATIC HIPS
This drill forces the arms to overwork because the hips are unable to turn through the shot, giving a feeling of the correct arm action. When the feeling is grooved, stand normally and add hip turn.

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CURING THE
SLICE

ROTATION DRILL



POSITION THE STICKER
Set up this rotation drill by placing a white sticker on top of the right forearm about six inches up from the wrist. Then make a swing and hold a sawn-off followthrough.

ARM CHECK



STICKER ON TOP
If you haven't under-released the forearms and allowed the natural mechanics of the arms and clubface to take effect, the sticker should be visible as you look down your arm.

NO RELEASE



HOLDING IT OPEN
If you can't see the sticker, the forearms haven't rotated and you have held the face open through impact. This increased likelihood of an open clubface will cause the slice.

Cause 8 Gear to cure the slice

HOW THE LATEST EQUIPMENT CAN HELP YOU CURE THAT CARD-WRECKING SHOT

If you suffer from the dreaded slice off the tee but don't have the spare hours to dedicate to lessons and practising on the range then there is still help available to you.

The advancement in golf equipment has seen the introduction of clubs to minimise

the effect of all manner of ball flight issues and chief among them is the slice.

Club manufacturers have spent millions of pounds and man hours developing clubs designed to combat the slice and they've become so good at doing it, that

they allow golfers to play with their current swing but with much better results.

However, first it's time for a reality check. You're not going to find a club out there that will turn your wild slice into a power draw. What these clubs will do is

manipulate the face angle at impact to overcome swing deficiencies such as an out-to-in swing path and minimise the effect of these. Therefore, a 40-yard slice can become a 15-20 yard slice and that is much more manageable to play with.

ANTI-SLICE DESIGN

Extra heel weight is a common anti-slice design trick. Most adjustable clubs offer this option while others, like Ping's K15 have it preset. The K15 has an extreme external weight pad in the rear heel of the sole.

CLOSE THE FACE

The second way drivers are tackling the slice is with adjustable clubheads. Drivers such as the Nike Machspeed feature adjustable hosels that allow the face to be opened or closed on demand.

WEIGHT POSITIONING

POWERFUL ACCURACY

Heel weighting repositions the centre of gravity and this helps the golfer to square or close the clubface at impact. The low weight also helps launch the ball on a higher trajectory with more power.

ADJUSTABLE CLUBHEADS

STRAIGHTER SHOTS

Someone suffering with a slice will traditionally want to close the face angle so it is squarer at impact in relation to the path of the club, resulting in a straighter ball flight.