

STAY DOWN A BEAT LONGER

Try this easy drill to prevent fat and thin shots

By Thomas Hawkeye Valdez

+ YOU MAY HAVE HEARD THE term “early extension” to describe a common downswing fault. It’s when your posture straightens prematurely before impact. It typically happens because inexperienced golfers try to rise up to help the ball in the air or add some extra power to the shot. Unfortunately, if you early extend, you’re altering your club’s path mid-swing, and that makes it really hard to find the sweet spot.

If you video your swing and see your spine angle getting more vertical as you start down with the club, I’ve got a drill for you. Best of all, you can do it while waiting to hit your next shot. Part of its inspiration comes from six-time PGA Tour winner Tony Finau, whose toes are literally off the ground and weight is in his heels before impact. This move helps stop early extension.

To get a feel for Tony’s move, put a golf ball under the toes of your trail foot. Now, to get the feeling of rotating without losing your spine angle, cross your arms over your chest and rest your forehead on your golf cart as if addressing a shot. Simulate a downswing while keeping your head on the cart (*left*). This is the feeling of spine tilt and side bending you want as your club moves through the impact zone. Coupled with keeping your weight off your toes, you’ll be able to hit more shots flush.

—WITH RON KASPRISKE

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