



## KNIGHT MOVES

EXCLUSIVE BY  
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# CLUBHEAD LAG & BETTER RELEASE

The left arm and the club shaft (for right-handers) should act as a double pendulum during the golf swing, with the left wrist acting as a hinge.

As discussed in the previous issue, your arms and wrists should be soft and loose, like ropes dangling from your shoulders, during the swing. If your arms and wrists are soft then you will be easily able to let the shaft trail the left arm (or the clubhead to trail the hands) in the downswing until impact.

This is known as clubhead lag and is something all great players achieve and yet seems to elude most club golfers.

Put simply, the definition of lag is when the shaft and left arm are out of line at impact (pic 2) or just after impact, which is the release.

Remember, release always occurs naturally. Any deliberate manipulation of the wrists or hands leads to an early release (pic 3), where the clubhead overtakes the hands and the bottom of the swing arc moves back away

from the ball, causing the player to hit fat or topped shots.

For example, a one-armed golfer will bind the club to their forearm using a leather strap, which means they can't manipulate their wrist at all. Therefore, the wrist will operate exactly as it should in the swing.

An early release is sometimes caused by the player's perception that the club needs to strike the ball on the upswing to help it to get airborne.

If you are having problems with hitting fat or topped shots, you may be releasing the club early. I suggest you try making some practice swings where you don't try and manipulate your wrist action. You should feel like your arms are dangling ropes and swing (pics 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 & 11).

You will be able to tell whether your clubhead lag is working and the club shaft is in line with your left arm at impact simply by examining your divot after each shot.

If there is no divot or a deep divot behind where the ball was positioned, this is a sure

sign of an early release. Your divot length should be between 10 and 20 centimetres – depending on the club, swing type and angle of attack – and the bottom of the divot should be five to 10 centimetres past the point of contact with the ball. Short and deep, or long and shallow, divots provide clues to the angle of attack into the ball by the clubhead.

Apart from reading your divots, always listen for the sound of impact. If the sound at impact is 'clicky' with a slightly higher pitch that means you have hit the ball thin. A fat shot will produce two sounds, whereas the good shot has a deeper, more distinct sound than a mis-hit.



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PHOTOS: BRENDAN JAMES X 11

