

Setting Up for the Perfect Swing

LEARN HOW YOUR POSTURE AND STANCE CAN IMPACT YOUR SWING.

By Ashley Ryan

A proper setup is crucial to any golf swing, laying the foundation for balance, alignment and swing mechanics throughout a round. Your posture and grip, ball position and stance all influence how the club moves through the ball. In fact, your setup shapes the outcome before you even swing.

“The setup is considered one of the most important elements of a successful golf swing,” says Carlo Borunda, the director of instruction at Newport Beach Country Club. “The power, precision, and consistency of your swings are directly impacted by your setup; therefore, as a golfer, you need to pay close attention to it.”

Borunda’s expert advice reveals how you can use pre-shot preparation to improve your golf swing and, ultimately, your overall score.

BAY WINDOW: *How can a proper setup impact your overall golf game?*

CARLO BORUNDA: Your confidence will increase as your swing becomes more consistent. The correct setup allows you to move in an athletic manner. This athletic swing is vital for developing a consistent golf swing. Alignment, posture, grip and the width of your stance all contribute to a successful swing, leading to improved play and lower scores.

BW: *What are the key elements of a proper golf stance?*

CB: The key elements of a proper golf stance begin with your feet. The ideal width of stance will provide balance without restricting body rotation. Balance in the golf swing is one of the most important keys to consistently delivering a solid strike to the golf ball. Investing time during your practice sessions devoted to perfecting your setup mechanics, especially with your PGA coach’s input, can result in noticeable gains in every aspect of your game.



The orientation of your feet (misaligned or pigeon-toed) can affect hip rotation, limiting your ability to produce power in the golf swing.



Too narrow or wide of a stance inhibits your ability to rotate your body, limiting the power you are able to deliver in the golf swing.

BW: *How important is your initial stance and posture in setting up a successful golf swing?*

CB: Your stance and posture are the foundations for a successful golf swing. With a slight break in the knees, bend forward from the hips while maintaining a relaxed but straight spine angle. The position of your upper body, including square shoulder alignment and spine tilt relative to the club in your hands, can dramatically improve the efficiency of your golf swing. The proper execution of this technique will directly influence consistency, power, accuracy and even prevent injuring your body.

BW: *How does the setup vary between a full swing, pitch, chip and putt? Does it also differ depending on the type of golf club used?*

CB: Adjusting your stance for the different techniques allows for more precise control of the golf club and golf ball. A narrower stance can be applied to the less powerful swings of putting, chipping and pitching. These swings in general are finesse swings where precision is the focus, so the width of your stance can assist with limiting body movement. Your stance should widen as you transition to the fuller swing with your irons, hybrids and fairway woods. The widest stance is used for the driver swing, which is your most powerful golf swing, requiring a wider base to support the additional movement and speed associated with this club.

BW: *What's the relationship between hip rotation and swing speed?*

CB: There is a direct correlation between hip rotation and swing speed. A proper setup optimizes hip rotation, providing stability and range of motion as the golfer attempts to produce speed in the full swing. An efficient and powerful hip rotation increases swing speed, leading to greater distance, while poor or limited rotation can reduce speed and power.

BW: *How should your setup change based on the lie, slope or shape of the hole?*

CB: Your setup needs to adjust to the lie, slope and hole shape to optimize swing mechanics, ball flight and shot outcome. Key changes include shifting weight and potentially modifying posture to improve balance, adjusting ball position to improve contact and altering alignment



Use alignment sticks to help you with aiming and to check your posture.

to account for the effects of terrain or to promote a certain shot shape. These modifications can significantly enhance your overall performance on the course, allowing for more precise shots and better control over the ball's trajectory. By practicing these adjustments, you can enhance your ability to handle unusual conditions, improving consistency and scoring. For best results, work with your PGA coach to refine your setup for these specific scenarios.

BW: *How does proper body positioning help prevent injuries?*

CB: Proper body alignment during the golf swing, especially in the setup, is essential for avoiding injuries by limiting tension on muscles and joints. A well-executed setup, which includes stance, posture, weight distribution and alignment, improves swing efficiency while reducing compensating movements. Golfers who prioritize pre-shot preparation are often better equipped to manage the sport's demands and minimize the risk of injuries. Beyond this, most golfers are trying to swing the golf club too fast, unaware of their physical limitations due to past injuries or lack of flexibility or mobility. Spending more time in the gym with a trainer improving their health is the ideal strategy for maintaining an injury-free lifestyle.

BW: *What are common mistakes you see amateur golfers make with their setup?*

CB: The most typical errors amateur golfers commit in their setup include poor posture, faulty grip mechanics, misalignment with the target and inconsistent ball positioning. This primarily stems from executing an inconsistent pre-shot routine or lacking one altogether.

BW: *How can golfers self-assess their setup to identify flaws? Can you use any tech to analyze setup?*

CB: Self-assessing your setup is a powerful way to identify and correct flaws, improving consistency and performance. Golfers should evaluate their positioning with visual feedback from a mirror or with the use of the camera on their phone. Many phone apps will aid this process through video analysis and tempo training, while launch monitors can provide useful club and ball data that can help you understand the effects of adjusting ball position. Several training aids can assist with grip mechanics and balance, while simple alignment sticks can be used to improve posture technique.

**CONTACT INFO: CARLO BORUNDA
CBORUNDA@NEWPORTBEACHCC.COM**