

“Seat” Your Hands for a Tension Free Grip

By Scotty Hofer

The importance of the grip is impossible to overestimate. It is your only connection to the club. If you have an improper grip, you must manipulate your swing to accommodate it. You should “seat” the shaft grip in, under, or against certain points in the hands so the hands, wrists, and forearms can function properly. Think of this seating of your hands as a perfect fitting of two things together, much like a valve seating in an internal combustion engine which ensures that no gases will escape in the combustion process.

Unlike the putting grip, the full swing grip should be more in the fingers than the palms. To accomplish this, we must first look at the anatomy of the hand. If you held your left thumb up and began to close your hand into a fist, you would see two fleshy pads created at the base of the palm near where it joins the wrist. The uppermost pad is an extension of the base of the thumb, while the lower pad houses the tendons controlling the last two fingers. Next, notice the crease that runs through the palm from in front of the thumb and down and across the palm, exiting about an inch from the base of the little finger. Finally, let’s define the joints of the fingers. The point where the fingers enter the palm is the base joint, the joint above it the middle joint, and the one nearest the finger tip is the end joint.

To promote a proper “seating” of your hands, start by holding your golf club in the right hand (for right handed golfers) along the shaft and extending it at a 45-degree angle in front of you at about waist height and centered on the body. Make sure the leading edge of the clubface is vertical.

Now extend your left hand to the grip material with the thumb up and the palm facing to the right. As you look down at the left hand, you should see the base knuckles of both the index and middle fingers. Place the lower fleshy pad of the palm on top of the grip material so that the grip butt exits the palm at the end of the crease across the palm and exits the fingers between the middle and end joint of the index finger. Without closing the rest of the fingers, crook the index finger as if you were preparing to pull the trigger of a pistol. You have now established the first two seats of the grip and should be able to control the club without much effort. To secure this seating, simply close the remaining fingers to the grip material. Finally, position the left thumb slightly to the right of the shaft centerline so that it can oppose the index finger and palm on the left side of the shaft and secure the club without hand or wrist tension (third seat). The thumb protrudes down the shaft well past the index finger.



With the left hand grip, move the club shaft to vertical in front of you. With the right palm facing you, align the right hand so that the shaft traverses a line from between the middle and end joints of the index finger to the middle joint of the little finger. Now raise the little finger of the right hand from the grip material and slide the right hand to the left until they are snug together. Choose one of three positions for the right little finger to create the fourth seat: 1) Overlap or Vardon grip – falls into a crevice between the base knuckles of the index and middle finger of the left hand; 2) Interlocking – intertwines with the left index finger (for golfers with small but strong hands); or 3) Ten Finger – place on the grip material and snug against the left index finger (for golfers with small and weak hands).



For the fifth seat, simply close the middle two fingers of the right hand to the grip material which should seat the grip between those two fingers and the fleshy pad at the base of the fingers. The sixth and seventh seats are established together. The palm of the right hand must cover the left thumb. The left thumb is seated in the crevice between the two pads near the base of the right hand which locks the

two hands together. As this is being done, place the right thumb so that the end joint is a quarter turn to the left of the shaft centerline. As with the left thumb, the right thumb now opposes the palm on the right and anchors the club between the two.

The eighth and final seat is accomplished by extending the right index finger along the shaft and crooking it around the shaft as if it were a trigger until the tips of the finger and thumb touch or almost touch. This places the bottom centerline of the shaft between the middle and end joints of the right index finger and creates a slight gap between the index and middle fingers. When the grip is done properly, the middle joint of the right index finger protrudes down the shaft about three-quarters of an inch past the tip of the thumb. As a final checkpoint, sole the club on the ground and assume the posture to begin your swing and make sure the creases or "V"'s formed between the thumbs and index fingers of both hands point towards the right shoulder.



Now that your hands are properly “seated” there is no need for excessive grip pressure. You want enough pressure to control the club but light enough to eliminate tension and allow the hands, wrist, and forearms to function properly.