

Other analogies can be useful as well. Although I've never done it, I can identify with the process of ski jumping. A jumper builds momentum down an arc-like ramp, then is slung outward, helped by his own explosive spring at the moment of "takeoff." The same principle is at work.

In performing the fingertip pendulum swing, most right-handed players instinctively choose to use their right hand, perhaps because the right hand is their dominant hand (and is also the hand known to be "trigger happy" at the top). So it's important to feel a swinging action from this isolated, right-handed standpoint. The left hand, however, is the swing's *guiding* hand (since it is in full contact with the grip). So a golfer might find it helpful to practice this exercise from the left hand feeling perspective as well. Finally, I practice a third way, and that is with *both* hands. This two-handed, or "four fingertip" approach can be especially helpful to someone who has difficulty maintaining a hold with the two fingertips of one hand.

A note of caution: If you employ both hands, make sure to place the two sets of fingertips very close together on the grip, if not touching. If you are right-handed, you want your right hand fingers on *top*. Vice versa for lefties. These positions— which are my own concoction— are opposite from the normal hand placement. Their purpose is to discourage what Ernest Jones called "levering," or using hand/finger leverage to force the club's motion back and forth.

2) One arm swing

Ouch. This is the harder one. Or, more accurately, this exercise *appears* to be much harder. I have to admit, when I first tried hitting balls with one arm I found the practice tremendously humbling (and discouraging). Indeed, most golfers who attempt such an endeavor give up immediately and never try it again. Almost all of us fail to understand what our failed action is telling us, loud and clear. We fail because we fail to **swing** the golf club!

Think about it. If you have successfully performed exercise #1 (the fingertip held pendulum swing with one hand) and have allowed the



clubhead to swing as far it will naturally swing in this mode (somewhere around hip high), you've already made about half of the full motion. To go full, all you need is to do is take a normal grip and free up your arm and body to accommodate a longer motion. The swing action is the same.

So there I was on the practice tee addressing the ball with the club in my right hand. My mind was churning. *How in the heck am I going to hit this thing with one arm?* After one or two shanks, I was almost a basket case. Talk about feeling a right hand “hitting” problem. With no left arm aid, believe me, I felt the faulty action in no uncertain terms! I also noticed that the people to the right of me were starting to inch farther away. Fortunately I never had to utter a cowering rendition of, *Sorry I Almost Took Your Head Off.*

I can joke about that day now, but it was a little embarrassing at the time. **I realized that my problem was completely mental in nature. I was focused on hitting the ball, instead of allowing the clubhead to swing.** A full one arm swing is not a great deal more difficult to achieve than a fingertip pendulum version— once you are fully attuned to a *swinging* motion. In my view, the great benefit of using one arm is that the feeling of your errors are more acute, just like when you feel that blatant exertion of effort to make the pendulum move faster. Total exposure of your faults can be disheartening, but should it happen to you, you will welcome it, because you will have learned a way to turn something that appears really bad into something really good... really fast. **A true swinging motion, personalized with your unique signature, wants to repeat itself.**

One quick tip: If you are right-handed and are using your right arm, a *full* right hand grip on the club may feel strange (since a portion of your right hand normally covers the left). However you choose to feel the contact, grip the club *lightly*. There is a definite tendency to perceive the need for a tighter single-handed connection on the club. I fell into this tension trap, and I paid the price. So go lighter than you think you need to. The club will not fly out of your hand, and you will swing it beautifully. **Gravity is your never failing friend, so let the clubhead free fall from the top. Squeezing on the grip will hinder its natural motion.**

