

The Rule-Free Golf Swing

Improve your game with
four simple pictures

Chris Riddoch

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INTRODUCTION

In 2012, I published *The Golf Swing: it's easier than you think*, the first book to describe scientifically the simplest and most effective way to improve a golf swing. The book described a new approach based on the principles of *motor skill science* rather than the traditional swing mechanics approach. Since publication, I've had many requests to translate the science into a guide explaining what players actually need to *do* when they practise and play.

This book is that guide. It's short – you'll probably read it in comfortably less than an hour – and there's a reason: improving a golf swing isn't complicated. In the time it takes to drink a few cups of coffee, you'll have all the tools you need to make real progress with your swing. This may surprise you because it sounds too simple, but it's fully supported by modern science. It may also surprise you to hear that the traditional approach to swing improvement – trying to move through a series of specific angles and positions – has no basis in science. Or, to give it due credit, it's based on the wrong science.

This is why we feel overwhelmed by complex swing mechanics, confused by swing theories and frustrated by our lack of progress. We practise hard, but nothing seems to work, and we get the distinct feeling we're wasting our time. As one eminent psychologist noted:

“Most of the practice most people do, most of the time, be it in the pursuit of learning the guitar or improving their golf game, yields almost no effect.”

—Gary Marcus, Professor of Psychology, New York University.¹

¹ Marcus, G. *Guitar Zero—the new musician and the science of learning*. Penguin Group, 2012.

But there's a solution—we can switch sciences. We can switch to motor skill science, which shows us how to improve our *skill*. And that's the main point: working on mechanics has little effect on skill; to improve skill, we need to work on skill! When we do this, our swing mechanics fall into place in the way that suits us best – we don't force them into someone else's idea of 'perfect.'

In this book, you'll find a simple, effective approach to improving your skill. You'll start to engage your powerful, innate skill-learning system—the system you stifle when you follow mechanical rules. It's an approach based on images, not words, which your brain will find easier to process. It's your way to a *Rule-Free Golf Swing*.

The book is organised roughly into two parts. First, we'll cover some basic principles of motor skill science to see why it's the simplest and best way to improve a golf swing. Then we'll find out how to use it—what we actually need to do during practice and play. Along the way, we'll strip the swing down to its four essential movements and see how a few carefully chosen images will help us master them. We'll also consider our short game, the best way to practise, how to transfer our new-found skills to the course and how players of all levels can benefit.

So let's start. First, we'll go back to where everything went wrong.

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