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## Is your golf heading in the right direction?

The best players in the world have to check their alignment regularly to ensure it is correct, most of them practice every day with metal rods, chalk lines or clubs down at their feet.

I had a friend of mine with me recently preparing for the first stage of European Tour School in September, he was practicing some wedges one morning and proceeded to hit 5 shots from a 100 meters all 4 meters right of the target and almost landing on each other at the perfect distance.

'Great swings!' I commented, he turned to me looking a little angry and said 'what

do mean great swings??? Everything I hit goes 4m to the right! I think I am getting in front of the ball at impact or clearing my hips to quick? 'He started to rehearse movements of the swing searching for answers. I immediately stopped him, 'If you hit 5 shots in a row perfect distance and exactly where you are aiming, I would have said that is as good a movement as possible, wouldn't you? , 'but I didn't! 'he





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protested, I let him set up for another and showed him his body and clubface alignment, when he looked he was amazed, 'it's all 4 meters right of my 100 meter target, I was swinging perfectly!'.

The best players in the world have to check their alignment regularly to ensure it is correct, most of them practice every day with metal rods, chalk lines or clubs down at their feet and swing path to make sure the start position is perfect, A good reason as above is that other corrections in the swing are not made to correct this fault, this will end up in inconsistency. When was the last time you checked your aiming and body alignment? Check it out soon and here are some facts and practice drills for you think about and try.

You cannot accurately align your club and body from the set up position alone. From the set up position we can only see the clubface or feet without seeing the target and vice versa when we look at the target we cannot see the clubface behind the ball or the feet below us.

Alignment must be done facing the target from behind the ball for the clubface and behind the bodyline for the feet, knees, hips and shoulders. Put clubs or lines on the floor and practice getting into a 'square' position where the clubface is aimed to the target and the body is parallel to this direction. Do this only looking at the clubs or lines you have put below you, when you have everything in a perfect position then look up at the target, if you had poor alignment previously you will find this a strange sensation, remember you know it is correct because you put the clubs on the floor perfectly!

There are lots of other optical illusions that can happen, try this and check that you are making aiming as easy as possible. Most people turn one or both feet outwards at set up to help the body turn during the swing, when aiming both club and feet it is very important to keep these feet square, imagine you had a box in between your feet, then turn your feet out after you have correct positioning. You test this by setting up

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squarely and then turning your right foot out and looking up to the target, then come back to square and turn your left foot out, now look at the target, you will feel like the alignment has changed, this is only an optical illusion as you know the ankles, legs and rest of your body didn't change, so always start square for aiming.

The end result of alignment drills is that your eyes and body realize what the correct club and body position really is. I know my clients live in the real world where it is not so easy to be on the range or the course practicing every day, this practice is not about hitting balls, it is about a basic routine, an essential part of golf and the brain and the body speaking the same language, so this is something you can do in your own garden or even indoors!

Once you have a sensation of what the correct 'square' alignment is you are ready to create a repeatable and accurate pre-shot routine that will feel comfortable and increase your confidence in your own ability.