

PGA TOURS: Great Golf Swings – MARK WILSON



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PGA TOURS: Swing the Golf Club Like Mark Wilson

Ben Hogan pound for pound was one of the greatest golfers who ever played the game and at five foot seven and one hundred and forty pounds he was a force to be reckoned with on the golf course. At 5 foot eight and one hundred and forty five pounds PGA tour player Mark Wilson like Hogan gets a lot out of his game and in this article I want to share with you some of the key factors in his excellent golf swing technique that help him to be a very straight and consistent golfer. We'll also look at some of the similarities between his golf swing technique and that of the great Ben Hogan.

Mark Wilson had a great start to the PGA tour season in 2011 with two victories in the first four events he competed in and accrued PGA money of more than two million dollars. By the end of four events he was averaging more than fourteen greens in regulation per round (PGA tour average is around twelve greens in regulation) ranking him in the top five golfers on the PGA tour for this statistical category.



So let's take a good look at some of the factors that help him to perform above average on the PGA tours in hitting greens in regulation on arguably the most competitive golf tour in the world.

In the address position Mark has an erect posture reminiscent of the late - great Ben Hogan with his chest up and arms comfortably extended out in front of him in a great place to start his back-swing from.

Mark also has his hands centred with his left hand in-line with the golf ball. This centred hand position and an almost straight right



arm helps him to keep his club-head outside his hands for longer as he moves the golf club into the back-swing phase.

This is a very good habit to develop as many amateur golfers tend to do the opposite and position their hands well in-front of the golf ball at address which influences their golf club to travel too quickly behind their body creating down-swing sequence problems that often result in pull shots and slice shots.

In photo 2 you can see in the early stage of the back-swing what I mean by the club-head staying in-front of the hands for longer. Notice how the club-head shaft is slightly angled away from the hands (white circle)?

Amateur golfers in this stage of the swing are likely to have the club-head where the yellow circle is. If you're someone who does this then maybe you can take a leaf out of Mark Wilson's book and set-up with your golf shaft more centred and your right arm a little straighter in the address position.



As Mark moves his hands and arms backwards away from the golf ball he does a fantastic job of keeping his upper torso over the golf ball. He does not compromise the stability of the right leg and hip as he moves into the second phase of the back-swing by sliding or bumping his hip and leg sideways.



Now here's what I believe is Marks master back-swing move - the move that helps him to set-up a great downswing. In the photo above note the position of the club-head which you will see I've labelled position one. Observe how I've drawn a red line up from the ball, under the club-head, through the right elbow and up under the right shoulder?

This is the track that Mark set's up to "lock" his back-swing in. From his 'club in-front of hands position' he simply swings the club-head up and behind him to the top of his back-swing which I've labelled as position two.

You can also see this very clearly in the Life Magazine photo of Ben Hogan (above) and what's interesting is that both of these fine golfers have what is considered by golfing theorists to be a relatively "flat" back-swing. That is, the location of the hands in relationship to the right shoulder position is on the low side, just above the right elbow position.

Many tour players are taught to position their hands more on (or opposite) the right shoulder and some even have the hands above the right shoulder which is often described as upright or steep.



The point here is that it doesn't matter so much whether you're under, on or above the shoulder position what matters is that two conditions are satisfied.

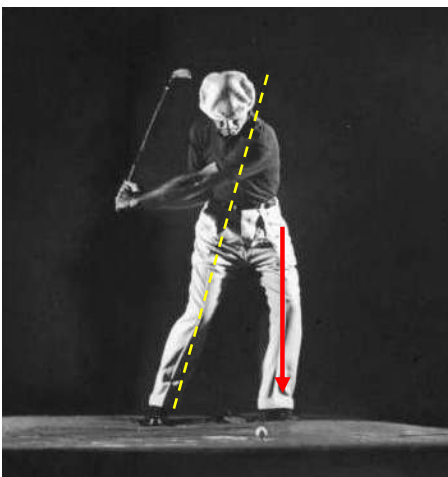
1. *The golf shaft is in its correct plane in relation to the base of it plane (green line bisects white line) which Mark Wilson describes so beautifully above.*
2. *Upper torso rotates sufficiently against the right leg seam angle (white line) to generate resistance to help more easily and naturally initiate the down-swing sequence. Like Hogan he has his right foot at a right angle to the target line and his left foot is 'flared' outwards approximately 20 degrees.*

Mark Wilson's backswing is compact mostly because of his low hand position at the top of his back swing which positions his left bicep muscle firmly against his left pectoral muscle which reduces the length of his left arm swing.

Also the 'squared off' right foot combined with the 'flared' left foot also helps to reduce the left arm swing length. The low left arm position keeps his right elbow very close to his side which simplifies his golf stroke because the right arm is not 'flailing about' off the side of his rib cage. Think of it this way, if your hands can remain quite close to your rib cage in the back-swing and down-swing then it stands to reason that the path and trajectory of your hands can do a much better job of controlling the golf clubs direction as it travels backwards and forwards.



Mark Wilson has a dynamic change of direction from the top of the back-swing to the start of the down-swing and by that I mean that there is almost no pause - more like a whip effect, where the club shaft changes direction similar to the way a fly fisherman casts a line using a whip motion.



A really important point here is that Mark isn't allowing his left hip to slide towards the target as this would be for him disastrous in terms of keeping his golf shaft on the correct plane as it travels towards the ball.

A hip slide would drop his club-head too much behind his hands leading to a shallow angle of approach into the golf ball. This is precisely why golfers like Mark Wilson and Ben Hogan shift their left knee onto their left ankle and simultaneously push their left leg into the

ground so they can rotate their left hip quickly to the left.

Many amateur golfers are instructed to shift their target side hip to the left towards the target to initiate the down-swing sequence, however it's important to recognize that some golfers actually need to rotate their hips to the left more aggressively to control the path of the down-swing so it doesn't drop too much to the inside leading to push shots to the right of the target.

Notice how both golfers have almost no lean or tilt of their body in this mid down-swing position? These golfers have to guard against any excessive leaning away from the target as they strike the ball, and they do this by stabilising the left leg as they move through the impact zone. If the hips slides too much towards the target and the spine angle leans away from the target the club-head will strike from an angle that is too much inside to out through impact.



The photos above show two important alignments that I want to discuss with you. In the left photo notice how as Mark Wilson strikes the ball his right elbow and forearm arm is in-line with the golf shaft?



This suggests that he has released the down-swing angle formed between his left forearm and golf shaft gradually and that even as the golf club strikes the ball the right arm has a noticeable bend in it.

I just love this photo. You can really see it here in this brilliant photo of Ben Hogan displaying what happens as the golf ball releases itself from the club-face.



Notice his bent right arm and also the in-line condition of his left forearm and club shaft? These two critical elements will help you to significantly improve your ball striking and you can see that both of these golfers satisfy these two important conditions. I cannot emphasise the importance of developing these two alignments in your golf swing.

The more that you learn to lag the club-head and deliver the golf shaft gradually into the golf ball the more likely you will produce a similar set of impact alignments which will help you to improve the trajectory of your golf shots and also the distance that you hit your shots.

In photo 6 (below) Mark Wilson has completely released the golf club both in terms of his left wrist angle and his right arm angle. The club-head is about three feet into the follow-through and we can learn a number of important things about what the golf club does at this point.



The first thing I want you to notice is how Mark Wilson's right arm and golf club form a straight line and that this line points down into the ground. This indicates the force he generated in his down-swing goes into the ground and that this photo shows the effects of it as the club-head comes up of the ground beyond impact.

The other important thing to note is the 'club-face roll' effect in this post-impact phase of the golf swing. The club-face releases downwards through the golf ball and into the ground and as it comes out of the ground the club-face starts to roll closed.

In photo 6 (above left) you can see the club-face has rolled so that the toe of Mark Wilson's club-face is pointing towards the sky. This effect is a consequence of the straightening right arm and the un-cocking left wrist rolling and applying a torque or twisting effect on the golf shaft.

This rolling effect keeps his golf club on plane as it moves towards the finish of his golf stroke. Take note of the club-face position (below left) how it's rolled closed even more and actually points towards the ground.

Ben Hogan described the sensation he had when he swung into the follow-through and finish as the 'long right arm.' The considerable momentum he created in his golf swing literally kept his right arm and shaft almost in-line well into the follow-through.

You can clearly see 'the long right arm' effect here in the right photo below of Mark Wilson with the fully extended right arm and shaft almost in-line indicating the tremendous pull of the arms and club and the rotary action of the body. He is not trying to create this effect, it is caused by the forces generated in his golf swing releasing correctly.



The other thing I really like about Mark Wilson's technique at this point in his swing is how his right shoulder, hip and knee line up (green dotted line) as the arms and club rotate around the body. This indicates that his right side of his body is simply rotating around his left side without excessive lateral motion.

What you don't want is the red dotted line at the same time in the swing where the upper torso and head is behind your right knee because it does two things.

1. *It puts enormous strain on your lower back and hips*
2. *It makes the golf club 'bottom out' early leading to 'fat' and 'thin' shots*

The in-line condition reduces pressure on the lower back and will allow Mark Wilson to remain competitive for many years to come as long as he maintains his strength and fitness.

The finish of your golf swing is a great gauge of how well your golf swing functions. Every golfer competing on the PGA tours has a balanced finish and Mark Wilson is no exception.



At the finish of your golf stroke ideally you will have rotated your upper torso so that your right shoulder is pointing towards your target. Your left arm will be more or less horizontal like you can see in the photo of Mark Wilson above and Ben Hogan below right.

The low left elbow position points to the rotary nature Mark Wilson and Ben Hogan’s golf swing and contrary to popular opinion the hips don’t actually point to the target at the finish of a golf stroke, they point to the left of the target.

When you observe great golfers swing the golf club you will always notice the complete rotation at the finish of their golf stroke and the ease with which they strike their ball.

They harness the forces of their golf swing and distribute the energy gradually so that the focal energy point occurs very close to the golf ball. Remember one very important distinction here:



You never drive your club-head at the ball which is described as hitting; you swing the golf-club through the golf ball and into the finish. Learn to finish your golf swing like these two great golfers and you’ll learn to strike solid consistent golf shots just like them.

PGA TOURS: Mark Wilson's Golf Swing Sequence





I hope you have enjoyed this basic analysis of Mark Wilson's excellent golf swing technique. I really enjoy watching him play and his golf swing technique is a real credit to the hard work he has put into it with the expert assistance of his golf teacher.



Whether he and his golf teacher actually modelled his golf swing on the great Ben Hogan is not known to me, although it's fair to say that Ben Hogan has had a massive influence on virtually every expert golf instructor because we are all caught up in the mystique surrounding his exceptional ball-striking performances on the golf course and his legendary dedication to practice.

In summary Mark Wilson in my opinion definitely qualifies as one who possesses one of the great golf swings of the PGA tours. His excellent golf swing technique is compact and very efficient which explains to a great extent why he ranks so high on the PGA money list.

You can learn how to make your golf swing more compact just like Mark Wilson by studying the photos in this article and applying the simple principles to your golf swing technique.

One thing all great ball strikers have in common is very sound impact conditions.

Learn how to lag your club-head behind your hands for longer in the down-swing and you will discover that it's easier to achieve solid golf shots that fly with a penetrating ball flight, as straight as an arrow, just like the pro's who play on the PGA tours.

Lawrie Montague

You can visit my golf blog: www.golfconfidence.org

Or you can visit my golf channel: www.youtube.com/user/golfconfidencepro