

HITTING



IN THE FOLLOW-THROUGH, the aggressive hitter's club is upright, while the swinger's club drops down behind him.

long time and had an almost vicious turn of his hips when moving into impact. It was a classic hitter action.

In the opposite corner are players like Vijay Singh and Fred Couples, who sometimes are seen with their right hands nearly falling off the club through impact. They are ultimate swingers whose passive hands are like swinging hinges.

So are you a hitter or a swinger? If your swing is long, relatively slow and your body, arms and hands feel relaxed, you are a swinger. If you have a comparatively short, quick action with a lot of tension in the body and a very firm grip on the club, you are a hitter.

At address and into the completion of the backswing, there is little mechanical difference between hitting and swinging. The real and noticeable difference is at impact and just afterward. The finish of the swing will tell you what you have done. The swinger's club will be higher and tilted down toward the ground, while the hitter's club will be more or less straight up in the air with the hands somewhat stiff.

There's another key point that illustrates the difference. The hitter's right hand at impact and beyond will be like a bowler's or someone throwing a softball underhanded. The swinger's right hand will roll over to the left.

The method you prefer is up to you, but the decision is sometimes made without much thinking. It just follows your natural

inclination. Also, it could be an expression of your physical makeup. For example, if you have a relatively quiet personality and like to do things even outside of golf in a careful, measured way, you will probably be a swinger. If you are a forceful person, someone who takes the bull by the horns, you will probably be a hitter. Those are very broad delineations, but they get to the overall sense of it.

In addition, tall people tend to be swingers if only because the natural length of their swing will generate enough force to propel the ball with ample power. They understand that intrinsically and simply go with their flow.

Hitters tend to be shorter in height and stockier in build. They almost invariably feel the need to apply more energy because they tend to make a shorter and often somewhat flatter swing.

Of course, none of the above is etched in stone. Hitters can be tall and slender, and swingers may be short and stocky. In fact, you can be either one as the mood strikes you or when facing a particular situation.

A swinger may be in between clubs for a shot in terms of distance to the green and feel that taking less club and hitting the ball hard will be better than a smooth swing with a longer club. Or he just may be feeling aggressive at that time.

A hitter may feel he needs to back off for the distance and take an 8-iron instead of a 9-iron for a shot. One way or the other, the

SWINGING



decision to be a hitter or not to be a hitter and vice versa must be made before you address the ball.

While both actions require properly executed protocols, a swinger doesn't need as much sheer strength to propel the ball a long way as long as his timing is on the mark, which is another important aspect. This is why a swing built around a hitting approach has the potential to hold up better under pressure. Most players tend to tighten up under the gun, and that can be a disaster to the swinger, who has to rely upon relaxation and timing much more than the muscularly contracting hitter.

Hopefully, you now understand a bit more about how hitting and swinging work so you can pick the right action for you and be confident that, regardless of the method you use, you can play your best golf. ☞

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