

Teacher Tips

BY RICK SMITH, Golf Digest Teaching Professional

A swing for greater consistency



Players often get preoccupied with individual positions in the swing and lose sight of the larger picture. It's best to remember this simple concept: The downswing is just a tilted circle.

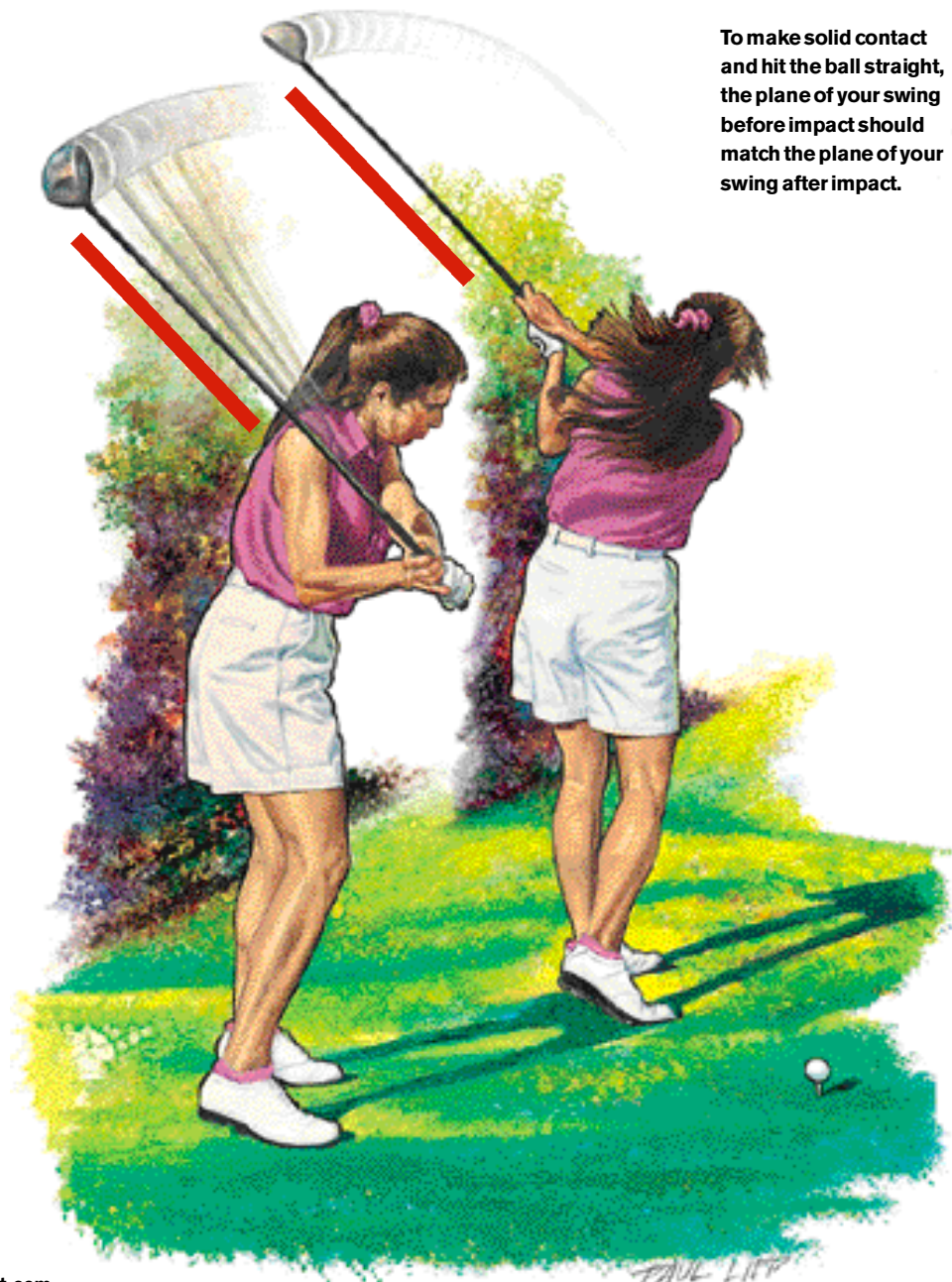
Match halves of the circle

If you understand the two halves of the swing circle, you'll learn to use your arms and body better and hit the ball more consistently.

In a good swing, the two halves of the downswing's circle—the part before you hit the ball and the part after you hit the ball—must match each other. If you swing down steeply and then follow through flat, you're likely to slice or pull the ball. If you swing down flat and up steeply, you're likely to hook or push the ball. Jack Nicklaus' circle was tilted more vertically, for a higher ball flight. Ben Hogan's was tilted more horizontally, for a lower ball flight.

You want your swing to look like the one shown in this illustration, where the angle of the shaft coming down matches the angle of the shaft on the follow-through. That's the look of a consistent swing.

Rick Smith, one of America's 50 Greatest Teachers, as ranked by Golf Digest, gives lessons at the Rick Smith Golf Academy at Treetops, in Gaylord, Mich., and at Tiburon in Naples, Fla.



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