

# Making the Cut

WE KNOW not everyone can find the time – or spare change for that matter – to visit their club professional each month. So we're bringing the expert to you with the third installment of our popular Making the Cut series, your anytime, anywhere free online video coach.

Check out the tips on the following pages and then go to our website [www.thecutmagazine.co.nz](http://www.thecutmagazine.co.nz) to watch the full video versions.

Making the Cut's expert host is Auckland-based Class AA PGA pro Craig Dixon, who calls the shots at the Waitemata Club in Devonport. Dixon also runs his own talent-stacked junior academy (see [www.craigdixonpga.co.nz](http://www.craigdixonpga.co.nz) for details) and looks after the North Harbour Special Olympics' team.

Dixon's popularity derives from his 'practice with a purpose' and holistic approach that covers every facet of the game, from correcting postural imperfections to installing the right dietary habits.

If you missed Dixon's first two Making the Cut episodes, don't worry. Just go to [www.thecutmagazine.co.nz](http://www.thecutmagazine.co.nz) and click on the series' link.

There you'll find the Short Game Shortcuts which featured in our March issue, and Dixon's Putt Like a Pro clips from last month, along of course, with the videos of the drills on the following pages.

## Chapter three: Power Play Secrets

The key to hitting it longer and straighter often lies in installing the right swing-plane habits, says Making the Cut's Craig Dixon. An incorrect set up could be robbing you of distance and causing a myriad of headaches, the most common of which is a chronic slice.

Over the next five pages, Dixon shares two quick-fix remedies that you can practice at home or even at the office.



Craig Dixon

## Drill 1: Set up for success

Without doubt, one of the most overlooked areas of any player's game is posture. Yet if you don't get it right at address, you're doomed before the swing starts.

"Correct posture influences the plane, lever systems and path of the club," says Dixon. "It's vital to get the right position at the start of the swing. It ensures that you have the best chance to swing on the right plane with good leverage and clubhead speed."

Dixon says setting up with a hunch or a sway in the back seriously inhibits your chances of achieving the correct backswing rotation - which means less acceleration and control through impact.



Photographs: Niels Schipper

To ensure perfect posture every time, just grab a driver, or any of the longer clubs in your bag, and place it behind your back as shown, feet shoulder width apart and legs straight.



You should feel contact with the club at three points: the back of the head, the shoulders, and on the tailbone – with no more than a finger's gap between the tailbone and shoulders. If there's too much of a gap between the club and your lower back, pulling in the tummy muscles should do the trick.

If not, Dixon advises seeing a physiotherapist, Pilates instructor or a golf specialist like Brad Takai of Flexi Clinic in Northcote.



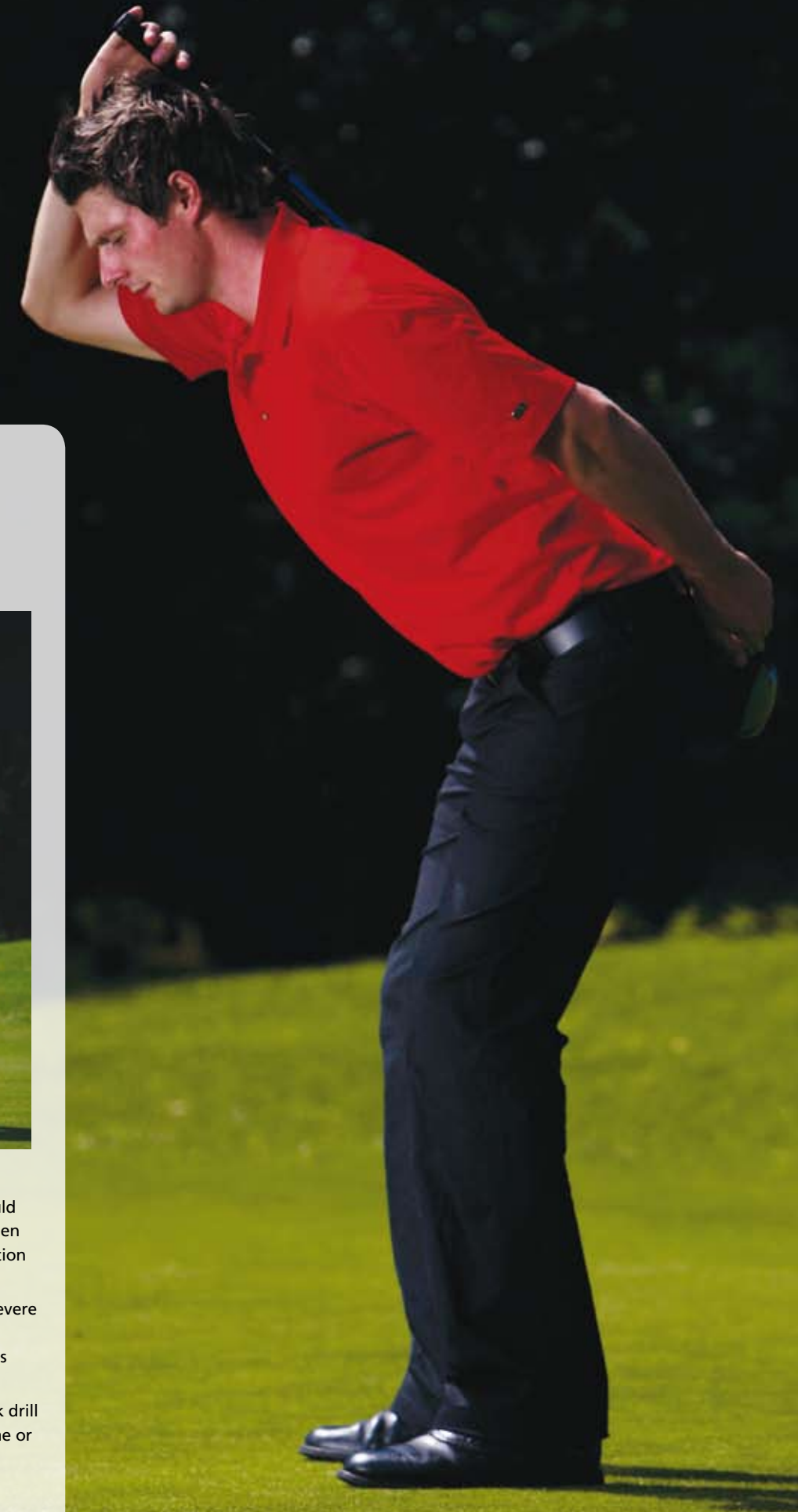
After you've mastered the correct spine alignment, keep hold of the club and tip forward around 45-degrees ensuring that you maintain contact with the club at the three check points: behind the head, shoulders and tailbone.



Next, slightly bend at the knees as you would when you normally address the ball, and then let the arms hang naturally. This is the position you want to get into before every shot.

It may feel uncomfortable at first, but persevere until you've retrained the muscles through repetition. Remember, old habits sometimes take a while to go.

This is a great anytime, anywhere self-check drill you can use on the practice fairway, at home or even between shots on the course.



### Drill 2: Banish your slice for good



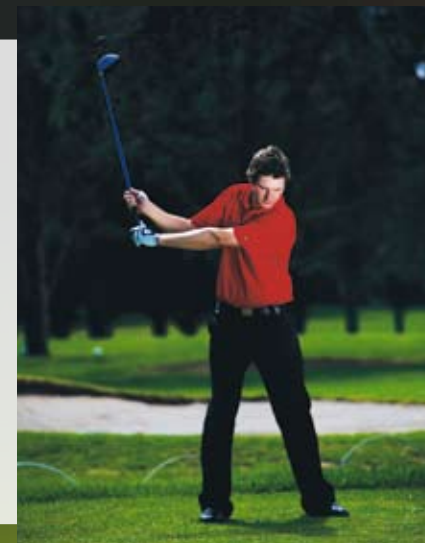
Once you've eliminated poor posture as the cause for slicing, this split grip drill is a great tool for sending wayward shots packing. Dixon says most players slice because the wrists and left elbow fail to hinge properly.



"In trying to hit the ball straight they end up with a chicken wing on the follow-through (pictured above). This drill promotes the release that we want; you should end up feeling that the forearms are almost touching if you're doing it right."



Start by grabbing any club with the left hand at the top of the club and the right hand at the bottom of the grip as shown (left-handed players do the reverse).



Take a full swing without hitting a ball, holding the club a foot off the ground and feel the accentuated rotation of the forearms through the impact area.



This is the type of release you want to feel when your hands are in the normal position, says Dixon.

▶▶ To see the video versions of these drills, log on to [www.thecutmagazine.co.nz](http://www.thecutmagazine.co.nz) ©