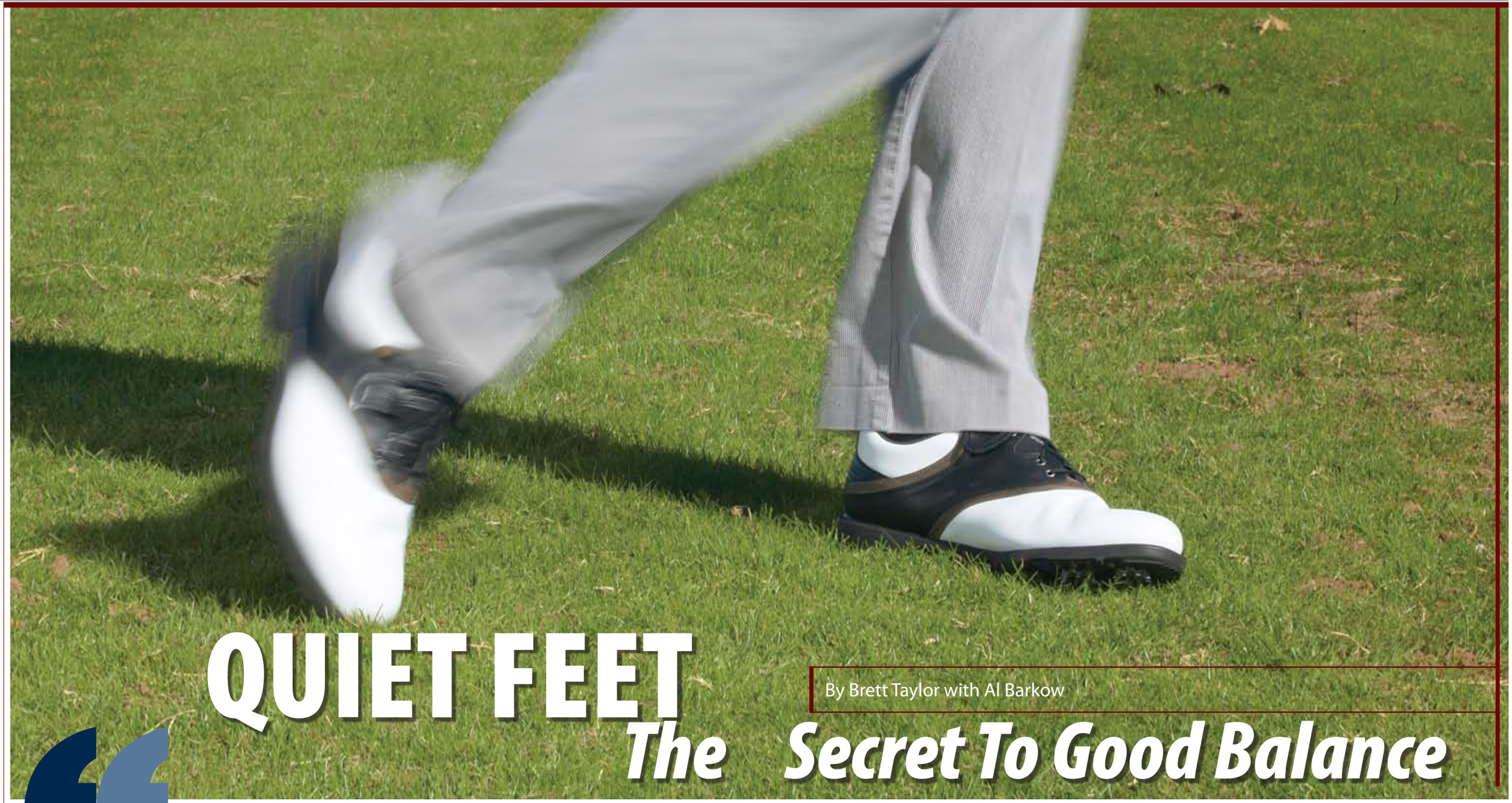

# QUIET FEET
## The Secret To Good Balance

By Brett Taylor with Al Barkow

**In a sense, the static aspect of footwork is about as important as the moving parts — maybe even more.**

The term footwork is slightly misleading because there is not that much work involved. It is or should be more passive than active. I see too many golfers doing too much with their feet and creating instability, a weak foundation from which to hit the ball and bad positions with their bodies that lead to poor shots. While there must be some foot action in the golf swing, much of it is the result of their placement at address. In a sense, the static aspect of footwork is about as important as the moving parts — maybe even more.

Let's say you are flexibility challenged. You're having problems making a good body turn, the kind of rotation that extends your backswing and makes for a nice swing tempo. There are some things you can do with your feet before you swing that will help that situation. First, flare out your right foot. Point the toes at an oblique angle away from the target. This will open up your right side a tad and give you some room to turn your right side.

In fact, you might want to flare out both feet, with the left at an oblique angle toward the target, so that the toes of each foot are farther apart than the heels. Now you have some room to make a good turn in the forward swing and get the club moving through impact. In all, you have improved both hip and shoulder rotation.

You will see the professionals square up their right foot and

**"I have found that when players are swinging well, they feel it in their feet."**

## Good Footwork: Irons And Driver

**There is virtually no difference in the footwork made by a driver swing (bottom) when compared to an iron swing (top). There is no excessive footwork in either direction until after impact with the ball, just enough to make you a consistently solid ball-striker. Weight transfers through the instep to the right heel in the backswing. As the backswing develops, the left heel remains grounded (for some it may come off the ground a bit), although there is a slight roll to the right as the backswing is completed. In the forward swing, the weight is transferred through the left instep to the heel of the left foot, and the right foot begins to roll onto its inside edge. The right foot comes off the ground at or just after impact, and the weight is carried onto the outer edge of the left foot. With the driver, there should be no "fire-and-fall-back" just because you are hitting the longest club in the bag.**

have it pointing directly on a 90-degree angle to the flight line. They do this to keep from moving too much to the right in the backswing, which is a problem for them because of their strength and the force of their swing. They also can pull this off because they have so much upper-body flexibility. Average golfers are not quite up to the pros' level in either category, of course, and must make a way for their body to rotate effectively. You can also put the right foot back a little more into a hook-stance position and flare the foot as mentioned previously to enhance good body rotation or turn in the backswing.

Another way to improve your body rotation via your stance is to concentrate your weight just under your arches. You never want to have your weight back on your heels at address, as this reduces your ability to rotate your body. Nor do you want it out on the toes, as this will cause you to get out of balance during the swing.

How should the feet move in the swing? There is a basic answer. The weight goes into the right heel on the backswing and into the left heel in the forward swing. The weight shift in both directions goes through the insteps. It is a kind of rolling of the feet, but always on the inside edge of the back foot, and only onto the outer edge of the left foot when the club is close to impact.

In almost every instance among the pros and most average golfers, you will see the right heel come off the ground in the forward swing. This often happens even

**"Excellent footwork will produce or enable you to swing with good stability and balance."**

before the ball is struck. This is a good thing, but here again you must allow it to happen and not make a conscious effort. It should be the result of and in fact will indicate that you have made good rotation and transfer of weight onto your left side. To force it is to put you in danger of swinging out of balance.

Golfers have been told for a very long time that you need to raise the left heel in order to make as full a backswing as possible. This is not true. You do not have to raise the heel if it doesn't want to. If you are limited in your flexibility, your body will tell your left foot what to do. It will demand a release of the left foot, i.e. a lifting of the heel. You should not try to keep the heel planted. If it happens to rise up, so be it. If you don't have to, you can swing on a somewhat more stable foundation, which is an incentive to improve your overall flexibility.

I have found that when players are swinging well, they feel it in their feet. However, I don't teach "live" feet, which is an active approach to footwork. I think you should look to your foot action to tell you are swinging the club well with your arms and body. Excellent footwork will produce or enable you to swing with good stability and balance. This will be reflected by increased clubhead speed and the club swinging on its most effective path with the clubface square to the target at impact.

On the other hand, poor footwork, which in my mind is overactive footwork, can disrupt your overall swing rhythm. Slack is added to the system, and your body must make continual compensations for it. Rhythm is enhanced, odd as it may sound, through relatively passive footwork.

Because the feet are the only parts of

## Poor Footwork: Overactive Feet And The Reverse-Pivot

**Overactive foot action (above) is the result or cause of a lateral slide to the right and a similar movement of the body to the left — in short, a sway. The weight goes to the outside edge of the right foot in the backswing and too much onto the outside edge of the left foot in the forward swing. There is little stability in this swing. In the reverse-pivot (below), the weight goes onto the left foot in the backswing and switches back to the right foot in the forward swing. This is the reverse of what the weight transfer should be to make a sound, effective swing. With the reverse-pivot, the body rises up and is leaning backward at impact, usually producing topped shots.**

## Solutions

**To make a fuller turn, consider pulling the right foot farther back from the target line (left). This will help you make a more complete turn in the backswing. It can cause a slight right-to-left ball flight — a hook — but only if your swing is standard. By flaring both feet out (below), you can develop a fuller turn in both the backswing and the forward swing. This is a recommended foot position at address for older golfers or any players with limited flexibility.**

Photos by BW Studios, Courtesy of Jerry Bowers, South Lakes Golf Course

your body touching the ground — a non-moving surface — you rotate your body against the ground.

Imagine making a swing suspended in air. You would be unable to generate much tangible power and clubhead speed with only your arms. You need the interaction between the feet and the ground. If the feet don't do their job, upper-body coil and torque will be minimal. Your muscles will not be stretched in the backswing, and assistance in generating clubhead speed will not be forthcoming. Yet again, odd as it may sound, by playing with relatively quiet feet, those good things will happen. The feet do not actively contribute power and control, but it's in their connection to the ground that they help you find maximum swing speed and accuracy. **GI**