

"Wave Goodbye" to the "Flying" Right Elbow

by Bob Menzies, PGA Professional

(Simply reverse if you are left-handed)

In the past, when someone has made a comment about your golf swing, did they happen to mention that you have a **"flying" right elbow**? If so, did you know exactly what they meant? The commonly used term -- the "flying" right elbow - has been around for decades. It refers to the position of the right arm and elbow at the top of one's backswing (see *picture below*). Basically, the more parallel that your right arm gets to that of the ground itself, the more of a "flying" right elbow you will have.



Ideally speaking, when the position of the right elbow at the top of your backswing is pointing *roughly* down towards the ground, it is then in a good position. To be more specific, the angle of the right arm at the top of your backswing should be *relatively* parallel to that of your back/spine angle position - the position that was established at your address position (see *picture of Tiger Woods below*).



Probably the best teaching aid available to help improve impact positions is called an **Impact Bag**. When taking your next lesson, be sure to ask your instructor if he or she has an "Impact Bag" that you can try! It will certainly help to put you into better positions!

If the right *elbow* is not roughly pointing down towards the ground, then consequently the right *arm* as well is now in a faulty position; hence, the "flying" right elbow. Typically, if a "flying" right elbow occurred at the top of your backswing, then the likely result would be a faulty downswing - mainly one that is "over-the-top" or often referred to as having swung from "outside-in".

With the aid of a mirror, I would strongly suggest that you check the position of your right arm and elbow at the top of your backswing. After having established good posture while you are in your address position. try this drill: without a club.

simply swing your right arm up to the top of your backswing - allowing it to bend and fold -- simulating a normal backswing motion. In having your right arm and elbow in a good position at the top of this simulated backswing, look in the mirror, and you should be in a position where you could easily and comfortably be able to "wave goodbye". Your right arm should appear to be in a classic "L" position. This is an **excellent** drill! I commonly use this drill on a daily basis with many of my students. Not only does this "waving goodbye" drill check for the dreaded "flying" right elbow, but it also promotes a free flowing and proper bending and folding of the right arm during the backswing.

* Most often the "flying" right elbow occurs when a faulty backswing is made. During the backswing, when the club gets pulled too "inside" of the target line too soon, then the club consequently gets too "behind" the golfer. Once that happens, then the arms "lift" to get the club up to a top-of-swing position. However, now the right arm/elbow is in that most dreaded "flying" position.

Give this drill a try, and "wave goodbye" to one of golf's oldest plaguing problems!