



“Use your pelvis to sling the club through impact.”



The Key to Speed

It's the hips—but not the way you might think

WHO DOESN'T love Rory McIlroy's golf swing, especially the way he can fire his hips on the way down and power through the ball. But if you're trying to rotate your hips even half as well as Rory to hit the ball farther, you should know that his hips are actually *slowing down* as the club approaches the ball.

My friend J.J. Rivet, a French biomechanist who works with the European Tour, has studied hip rotation in elite-level golfers and has measured the speed in which their hips are moving in the downswing. The average is about 600 degrees per second in the initial phase, but the hips rapidly slow down as the club approaches the ball, to an average of 200 degrees per second. Why? J.J. calls it the catapult effect, and I'll explain it in layman's terms. Imagine you're driving a car at a decent speed. If you apply the breaks quickly, your body lurches forward

(hopefully against a seat belt). In the golf swing, if your hips decelerate quickly in the downswing, the club lurches forward, speeding up as it approaches the ball. The catapult's arm comes to a halt, but the sling keeps moving. That's power.

Now for the hips to decelerate properly, you need your lower body to be stable. That's why you see me standing on alignment rods (*below*). When you practice your full swing, standing on the rods reminds you to keep your feet grounded, which allows you to accelerate and decelerate the hips correctly. Whenever you see a golfer “spin out” as they swing the club through, that means they didn't have good lower-body stability. If you anchor your swing, you'll catapult the club into the ball—like Rory.

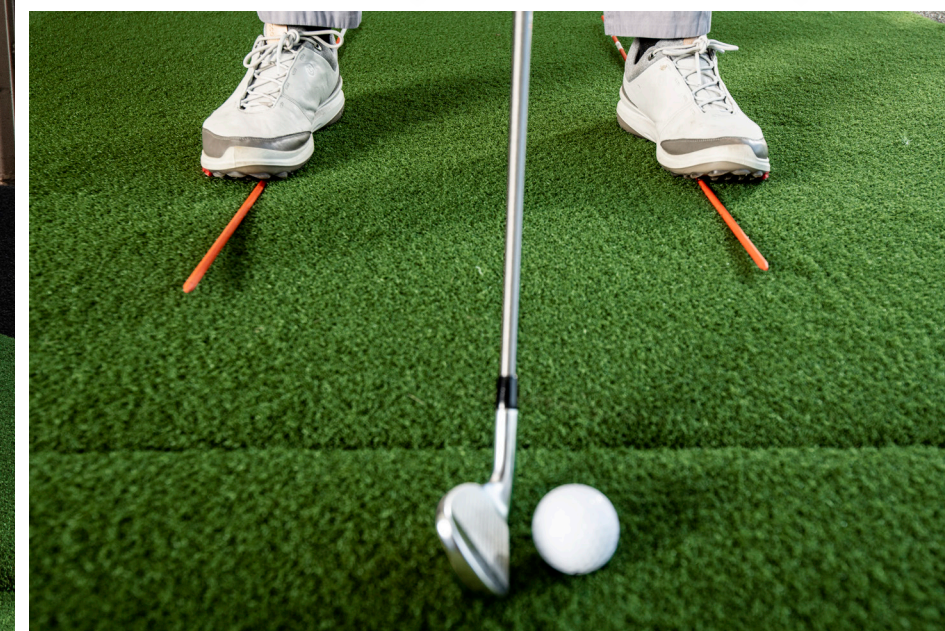
—WITH RON KASPRISKE

DAVID LEADBETTER is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.

ASK GOLF DIGEST

Q Do top players really score better with a \$2,500 set of clubs than with a \$400 set? How about balls? Does a \$48 dozen beat a \$20 box? **RALPH BOLGIANO**
FULKS RUN, VA.

A Precision is everything for elite players. The shafts found in box sets aren't as consistent, for example, and trajectory and spin are harder to control with lower-quality balls. Could a top player go low with inexpensive gear? Sure. But their chances are better with the good stuff.



► **ANCHOR YOUR SWING** Standing on alignment rods gives your feet feedback about stability.