

10 Rules To Hit It Huge



By [Bubba Watson](#)

With Guy Yocom

Photo by Michael Schulz

June 2010

1. You Probably Need More Loft

My wife, Angie, is a good athlete who played pro basketball with the WNBA's Charlotte Sting. When she started playing golf seriously, six years ago, she used a driver with 9 degrees of loft and could carry the ball about 170 yards. Just before she played in the Bob Hope Classic pro-am earlier this year (a fifth-anniversary gift from me), she switched to a driver with 13 degrees. She instantly increased her carry distance to 215 yards with the same amount of roll she had before. Angie isn't much different from most male amateurs in that the quickest shortcut to more distance is getting a driver with more loft. And don't stop there; get a light, properly fitted shaft, too. You should use every bit of technology available before taking the leap of overhauling your swing. A custom-fit driver can easily give you 20 yards overnight; changing your swing can take months, or longer.

2. Utilize Your Best Physical Trait

Long hitters are long for different reasons. J.B. Holmes has a thick, strong, corn-fed kind of build. He's very powerful from the elbows down, with strong, fast hands. Dustin Johnson is sort of skinny, with tremendous speed in his hips and torso. Me, I'm tall with a wide arc and long swing. People have different physical assets. It might be strong thighs, broad shoulders, a

strong core, whatever. Find your strong point physically, and take advantage of it. And be careful that an instructor doesn't try to build your swing around a part of you that isn't your strongest point.

3. Try A Shorter Shaft

Twice I've been offered a spot in the Re/Max World Long Drive Championship, and both times I turned it down. It was nice to be invited, but I thought altering my swing specifically to get more distance for that one event might wreck my game. But I did toy with the idea, and even had Ping build me a driver with 5.5 degrees of loft and an extra-long, 48-inch shaft. The longer shaft, which many people assume is an automatic trick to generating more clubhead speed, didn't work at all. It threw my timing off, and I didn't hit the ball much farther even when I nailed it. I did much better with my standard 44½-inch driver, simply swinging a little harder.

Trying a longer shaft is a popular suggestion these days, but most players should, if anything, try a shaft half an inch *shorter* than what's in their driver. (The average, off-the-rack driver shaft today is 45½ inches.) Tiger Woods at his longest used a relatively short 43½-inch driver, with a steel shaft to boot. You'll find it easier to hit the sweet spot with a shorter shaft, and you can go after tee shots without losing much control.

4. Learn To Hit A Draw

learn to draw the ball If you slice, you're not paying as high a price as players used to with the older equipment. That's because modern drivers don't spin the ball as much, and the ball doesn't spin as much, either. But the lesser penalty for a slice has lulled a lot of amateurs to sleep. The best way to really boom the ball out there is to swing from the inside and turn it over. You'll compress the ball more, and the shot will bore through the wind better. And if you find the right driver, you'll carry the ball farther with a draw than you would with a fade - another result of modern equipment.

5. Accept Days When You Don't Have It

I started the last day of Bay Hill in 2008 in a five-way tie for the lead. For the first 10 holes, I hooked almost every shot, even when I consciously tried to hit a big fade. I was hitting the ball so far off line it cost me not only accuracy but distance. I fought that darned hook the entire time, and after a while it was too late to recover. I finished tied for eighth. If I had it to do over, I would've just accepted my natural ball flight that day instead of wrestling with it. There are times when you'll wake up with a certain ball flight, or you just don't feel as strong or flexible as you normally do. Roll with it. That's what separates great players from the rest of the field.

6. Tee Off Like You Just Made Bogey

We all get a little angry at times after making a dumb bogey or double. How many times when that happens do we just get up on the next hole and rip it down the middle? A lot. The reason is, you're so distracted by being mad that you don't strategize too much or get balled up with swing mechanics. Try to hit every tee shot that way. Use emotion more than thought. It's amazing how your body will respond to plain old desire.

7. If You're Small, Hit More Balls

There are ways for smaller or older golfers to condition themselves to get more power, even if they don't spend time in the gym. For many, the best training ground is the practice range, the old rock pile. So wear it out. Ben Hogan once said that beating hundreds of balls made him

incredibly strong and improved his swing along the way. Get "golf strong" by hitting a lot of balls. Your hands and arms will become more wiry and your body more toned.



8. Flare Out Your Front Foot

I've played a lot of practice rounds with Tiger (who I tease for being a short hitter, by the way). When Tiger wants to really pound a drive, he fans his left foot out at about a 45-degree angle. That almost forces him to clear his hips and lower body faster through the swing, his belly button facing left of the target at the finish. It allows him to generate tremendous power. I've copied that move from Tiger, and it works. Just be careful not to flare the foot out too far, or you'll limit your backswing turn. Get it right, and you'll hear the difference -- you'll make a louder swish when you swing the club through impact.

9. Beware: Rust Forms Fast

If I go three days without playing, I know I'm not going to show up with my usual 126 miles per hour of clubhead speed. Rust kills distance, and it doesn't take long to form. Going a week without playing is the story of the amateur golfer's life, so learn to live with it, and lower your expectations a little. You can fend off the rust by making 30 or 40 full-speed practice swings on days you can't make it to the course.

10. Tee Off Like You Just Made Bogey

I've heard guys talk about making a big shoulder turn on the backswing but a modest hip turn. I say that's bogus. The farther I turn my hips, the farther I can turn my shoulders, and the farther I can hit the ball. Don't restrict your backswing in any way. Turn *everything*, so you have as much windup as you possibly can. Extra motion means a longer swing, more clubhead speed and big distance.