

CST's 7 Key Components

~Ryan Murdock

The greatest mistake made by novice Clubbell® swingers—and by those so-called “gurus” who advocate “Indian club swinging” on YouTube—is that they turn club swinging into nothing more than an arm and shoulder exercise.

Proper club swinging should transfer the load to the ground by incorporating your entire body. That’s the point of the exercise. Grappling with this most inefficient of tools in three dimensions teaches your body to absorb and redirect force, to recruit more joints for greater efficiency, to transfer force across your body in non-linear and circular patterns, to apply your strength in an unpredictable, open-chain setting—a setting that mimics the chaos of real life. The muscle growth caused by wielding the weight *is only part of the point* of the exercise. Even greater benefits come from the neurological efficiency you’ll gain as a direct result of learning to integrate your body and direct the sum of its forces.

You may be able to get away with “arm swinging” a 5lb Clubbell®, but as you move past the 15s and on to heavier weights you’ll have to recruit the rest of your body. And you’ll have to recruit it safely if you want to avoid a sidelining injury.

We do this through integrating the 7 Key Components of Structure:

- 1) Crown to Coccyx Alignment
- 2) Shoulder Pack
- 3) Arm Lock
- 4) Grip Confirmation
- 5) Core Activation
- 6) Hip Recruitment
- 7) Leg Drive

Think of the 7 Key Components as the links in your “power chain.” When each link is aligned, force is transferred smoothly through the entire system. If a link is missing, you’ll only have access to the

force production of the links between that break and your application of force—in this case, your Clubbell®.

Let’s look at shoulder pack as an example. You may have solid grip confirmation and perfect arm lock, but if you’re lacking shoulder pack you will be moving the Clubbell® with only the force of your arm. You will not be able to access the stabilizing force of core contraction or the driving forces of your legs.

To put that into a sport-specific context, a fighter who lacks shoulder pack cannot transfer the force of a strike up his legs, snapping through his hips and out the length of his arm. Unless he learns how to integrate proper mechanics into his strikes, he will forever be an ineffective “arm puncher.”

Proper technique in Clubbell® swinging is designed to engrain these mechanics into your body, so that you learn to transfer and absorb force with the utmost human efficiency, using the full potential of your body.

For a skilled CST Coach, the 7 Key Components can also act as a predictor of injury. Those broken links in your “power chain”—where one of the 7 Key Components is missing—tend to be the places where injury happens.

Let’s look again at shoulder pack for the sake of example. Our hypothetical Clubbell® athlete is working on sets of Head Casts (a movement in which you extend the Clubbell® overhead from back position, using a strong core contraction).

He’s managing to get the Clubbell® up there, but his right shoulder keeps coming out of pack, and so he’s robbing himself of the power he could be deriving from that strong core contraction. He’s also embedding an awful lot of force in the soft tissue around that shoulder. Because the load is leaking there, it isn’t being transferred down

through his structure, and other soft tissues are recruited to brace and assume more of the work needed to stabilize the weight overhead. He's only a few reps away from an overuse injury, a torn rotator cuff, or worse.

Internalizing these 7 Key Components—and paying diligent attention to them in your training sessions—will be your key to safe club swinging.

Coach Steer and I've prepared a video example which will introduce you to each of the 7 Key Components. Please follow this link to our Insider's Video Page, then scroll down to the video called "Two-Handed Club Swinging Principles"
<http://www.clubbellcoach.com/intro-clubbell/>

You'll also find bonus video tutorials for several other Clubbell exercises on that page, but study the intro clip first and work to internalize its principles.

~ ~Ryan Murdock is a Faculty Head Coach (<http://www.rmaxstaff.com/murdock/index.html>) and Editor-in-Chief of RMAX Magazine. He also has a travel writing website at <http://www.ryanmurdock.com/> and is a contributing editor for Outpost Magazine.

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