

TECH TALK

Gripping

The grip is the only contact a golfer has with the club period. A properly installed and fitted grip will feel comfortable in the hand and will help with the player's perception of impact. Many places will offer gripping services but will not provide the attention to detail needed for a properly installed grip. To begin with, the outer diameter, OD, of the shaft's butt must be known along with the internal diameter, ID, of the grip being installed. These two measurements will determine the initial size of the installed grip. The proper grip tape and build up tape will finalize proper sizing of the installed grip. Finally, what impact does the grip have on swing weight?

When a smaller core is placed on a larger shaft butt, the grip will be larger than standard size. When placing a larger core on a smaller shaft butt, grip size will be smaller than standard size. An example of inattentiveness in gripping follows. Install a M58 ID grip onto a .600" OD shaft butt. The M stands for Men's and the 58 stands for the ID of the grip, in this case .580". So you can probably see where this is going. If a grip has a smaller ID .580", than the OD of the shaft butt .600", when installed, a standard men's size grip will not be achieved. What will be achieved is a larger than standard men's sized grip. Conversely when, the ID is larger than the OD of the shaft butt, a smaller than standard men's grip will be achieved.

Then there is the issue of altering the size of a grip using build up tape. What is the standard men's size grip measured 2" below the grip cap? That would be stated in decimal form as .900". The size increases are as follows, .915", .930", .945", .960", and 1.025". The equivalent fractional sizes are as follows, +1/64", +1/32", +3/64", +1/16" and +1/8". This may seem a little complicated but necessary in understanding there is more to installing grips than cutting one off and putting one on. The buildup tape's diameter needs to be .015" per layer otherwise the installer will never achieve the correct size required by the golfer.

Now that we know how to identify a standard grip and how to create it and how to create different grip sizes, what effect does the weight of a grip have on the balance of a golf club? A standard grip weight for calculating how a grip impacts club balance will be 52 grams. As you may suspect, many standard sized grips are around 52 grams so using this weight as a starting point works well. Every 4 grams +/- will alter the swing weight of a club by +/- 1 swing weight. This means the feel of the club head will be heavier or lighter relative to the change in grip weight. If a golfer changes grip weight from a std. 52 gram grip to a 60 gram grip, the swing weight will change by - 2. If that club had a swing weight of d-2, after the grip install, the club will have a swing weight of d-0. This change will create a lighter head feel. Likewise if you install a 44 gram grip, the club's swing weight will change to d-4. This change will create a heavier head feel. Also, the addition of layers of buildup tape will produce swing weight changes as well.

To conclude, I hope I have shed light on this seemingly simple activity of installing grips. Getting the correct grip size will enhance your feel of the golf club, and with better feel, your chances of producing a better swing will increase.