

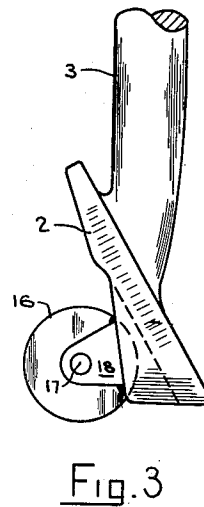
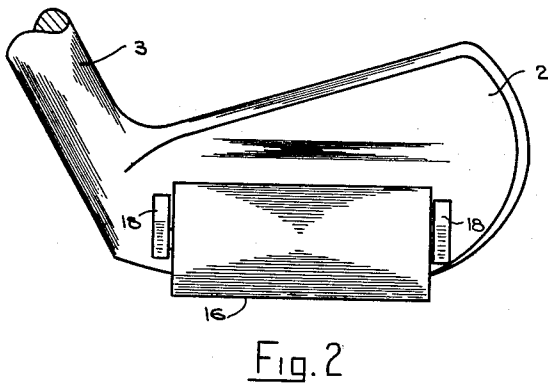
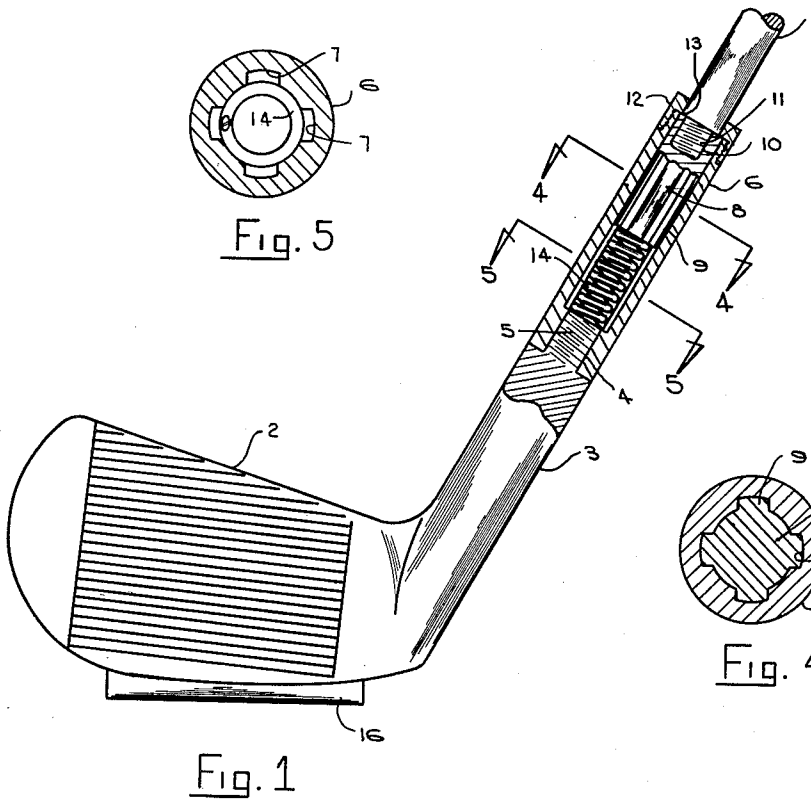
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PRACTICE GOLF CLUB CONSTRUCTION

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PRACTICE GOLF CLUB CONSTRUCTION

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This invention relates to practice golf club constructions and more particularly to practice golf clubs of such construction as to enable the user to swing a club towards a relatively unyielding surface such as a concrete floor, frozen ground, or the like and yet permit the user to experience substantially the same feeling he experiences when hitting a golf ball lying on a fairway.

An experienced golfer making an iron shot on a fairway usually permits the blade of his club head to bite slightly into the fairway turf as the club head strikes the ball. As a result, a certain amount of drag is imposed on the club head, part of which is caused by the engagement of the club head with the fairway turf and part of which is caused by engagement of the club and the ball. In many parts of the country it is not possible to play golf year round, due to cold weather or the like, but for a golfer to maintain his proficiency it is necessary that he practice his swing.

Many golfers are forced to practice their swings indoors on such hard surfaces as concrete, or outdoors on hard or frozen ground. In some instances golfers practice their swing on a mat formed from automobile tire type rubber or the like, but in each instance the feeling experienced by the golfer when the club head strikes the surface is unlike that experienced when a shot is made on a fairway. Moreover, the striking of a club head against a surface such as concrete or a rubber mat is not altogether comfortable and, in the case of concrete, may seriously damage the club head. Accordingly, the tendency of a golfer is to swing the club close to the surface, but not actually engage the latter. As a result, the golfer does not practice the swing he intends to take when actually playing golf and his proficiency suffers.

An object of this invention is to provide a practice golf club construction which will enable a golfer to practice his swing on any surface without fear of injuring the club or the practice surface and which will closely simulate the swing the golfer takes when actually playing golf.

Another object of the invention is to provide a practice golf club which is so constructed as to simulate the forces imposed on a conventional golf club when the latter is used on a fairway.

A further object of the invention is to provide a practice golf club in which the club head and the club shaft are capable of relative movement upon engagement of the club head with the practice surface.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will be pointed out specifically or will become apparent from the following description when it is considered with the appended claims and the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIGURE 1 is a fragmentary view, partly in front elevation and partly in section, of a practice golf club constructed in accordance with one embodiment of the invention;

FIGURE 2 is a fragmentary rear elevational view;

FIGURE 3 is a fragmentary side elevational view;

FIGURE 4 is a sectional view taken on the line 4-4 of FIGURE 1; and

FIGURE 5 is a sectional view taken on the line 5-5 of FIGURE 1.

A practice golf club constructed in accordance with the embodiment of the invention shown comprises a shaft 1 having at one of its ends a portion to be gripped

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by the hands of the user in the customary manner. The construction also includes a club head 2 of substantially conventional iron design and which is integrally formed with a hosel member 3 as is conventional. The hosel member 3 is provided with a reduced end portion 4 which preferably is threaded as at 5. Threadedly received on the end portion 4 is a tubular member 6 which preferably has its inner periphery provided with longitudinally extending spline grooves 7. Slidably received within the tubular member 6 is a plunger 8 having spline teeth 9 formed thereon for reception in the spline grooves 7 of the tubular part. The plunger 8 may be provided with a threaded socket 10 adapted to receive a threaded extension 11 formed on the lower end of the shaft 1 so as removably to connect the shaft with the plunger. In the disclosed embodiment of the invention the tubular member 6 is threaded at its upper end for reception of a threaded cap 12, the latter having an opening therein to accommodate the shaft 1. Alternatively, the upper end of the tubular member 6 could be joined integrally to a part corresponding to the cap 12, but in either event the portion of the cap surrounding the shaft accommodating opening should overlie the spline teeth 9 so as to provide stop means 13 for preventing inadvertent separation of the plunger from the member 6.

The construction and arrangement of the parts thus far described are such that the club head 2 is movable relatively to the club shaft 1 in a direction tending to shorten the overall length of the club when the club head is brought into engagement with the ground or other surface. In order to oppose such relative movement, and also to return the parts to the positions shown in FIGURE 1 when the club head is removed from ground engagement, a yieldable spring 14 of suitable strength is interposed between the extension 5 of the hosel and the plunger 8. Springs of varying strength may be made available and may be substituted for the spring 14 by the user's unscrewing the club head from the tubular member 6.

Practice clubs constructed in accordance with the invention preferably include a ground engaging member or part formed of yieldable material so as to prevent damaging the club head or the surface on which the user stands to swing the club and also for the purpose of inducing a drag on the club head in opposition to the direction of its swing. In the embodiment of the invention disclosed, the ground engaging part comprises a cylinder 16 formed of rubber or the like and which is fixed on a spindle 17. The end of the spindle 17 may be fixed in mounting brackets 18 which are welded or otherwise suitably secured to the rear face of the club head 2.

In the operation of the apparatus thus far described, the user grasps the upper end of the club shaft 1 in a conventional manner and executes a swing similar to the swing he would make a hit a ball lying on a fairway. As the club head approaches the surface on which the user is standing, the ground engaging part 16 will engage the surface and will exert a force on the club in opposition to the direction in which the club is swung. This opposing force will approximate the resistance offered by a ball to the motion of a conventional golf club. Simultaneously, the engagement of the ground engaging part 16 with the surface will exert an upward thrust on the club head 2 and hosel 3, against the force of the spring 14, so as to effect relative movement between the club head and the club shaft. The force of the spring 14 in opposing relative movement of the club head and the club shaft will approximate the resistance exerted on a conventional golf club when the club head of the latter bites into the turf of a fairway when a conventional iron shot is being made. The result of the construction shown

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is that a golfer may practice his swing on any surface and experience substantially the same feeling he experiences when playing a shot on a fairway, but without damaging either the practice golf club or the surface on which he stands.

In the disclosed embodiment of the invention the size and arrangement of the ground engaging part 16 should be such as to permit a certain amount of compression of the rubber or rubber-like material without permitting the lower edge of the club head to strike the practice surface. This characteristic of the invention is assured by so mounting the ground engaging part on the club head that the cylinder projects below the club head.

The disclosed embodiment is representative of a presently preferred form of the invention, but is intended to be illustrative rather than definitive thereof. The invention is defined in the claims.

I claim:

1. A practice golf club construction comprising a club head part; a club shaft part; rigid, hollow, tubular means secured to one of said parts and slideably receiving a terminal end portion of the other of said parts; inter-engaging means formed on said tubular means and on the terminal end portion of the other part that is received within said tubular means and cooperating with one another to prevent relative rotation of said parts while permitting limited relative reciprocating movements thereof; ground engaging means extending below the lowermost surface of said club head part to protect said club head part and to provide appreciable resistance to swing-

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ing movement of said club head part across the ground; spring means received in said tubular means and interposed between said parts and constantly exerting a force on said parts tending to elongate the overall length of the club construction, said spring means being yieldable to permit relative movement of said parts in a direction to shorten the overall length of said club construction upon ground engagement of said ground engaging means; and limit means reacting between said tubular means and said terminal end portion of said other of said parts for limiting relative movement of said parts in a direction to elongate the overall length of said club construction.

2. The construction set forth in claim 1 wherein said ground engaging means comprises a substantially cylindrical member restrained against rotation.

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