One word of caution on the grip.

Almost never fix your grip first!

First work on the compensation that you are performing for your faulty grip and then changing your grip will make sense to you and not be as uncomfortable.
The Grip

As you prepare to hit a golf ball, the first thing you do is grip the club. The next thing you do is aim your club at the target and align your body with the club and target line.

You are now positioned to strike the ball. These actions are all closely related; one directly affects the other. So close is the relationship that it may be hard to separate cause from effect. However because a golfer must inevitably grip the club before doing anything, let us begin here.

Since the grip is your only real connection to the club, you can easily understand its importance. If you have a grip that is unstable, inconsistent, or poorly positioned, your swing will never be efficient or reliable.

The Grip and the Club Face

The most important function of the grip is controlling club face angle. As you now know, this angle is a primary influence on ball flight. Also, the way you hold and control the club face position influences your overall swing motion.

You probably have seen illustrations of the Vardon grip, the most common modern golf grip. You may have focused on the overlapping pinky as the most significant aspect of the grip. You would naturally assume that if you placed your hands and fingers in this approximate position, you would have a proper grip. You might have missed the most significant point: the positioning of the hands in relation to the club face angle. This relationship has surprising influence on your swing and, more importantly, on your ball flight.

Hand Position and Club Face Angle

Most golf books will tell you that the back of your left hand should be facing the target, yet I find that most tour players or good amateurs play from what is called a “stronger” grip position. The back of your left hand should be facing about 10 o’clock and the palm of your left hand at 4 o’clock. The club runs at an angle from the fleshy pad of the hand to the point where it runs across the top joint of the forefinger. As your left hand closes on the club, you should be able to see the knuckles of the forefinger and middle finger as you look straight down on the club. The thumb runs down at about 2 o’clock on the grip and the “V” formed by your thumb and hand will point somewhere between your right ear and right shoulder. Please refer to the illustrations for samples.

If the left hand is turned excessively in a clockwise direction, so the back of your hand points skyward or to the right of the target line, you have too “strong” a grip. The opposite is true for too “weak” a grip.
With the left hand in good position, the right hand should fall in a naturally opposing position, so the palm of the right hand is pointed at about 10 o’clock. The “lifeline” of the lower hand fits over the thumb of the upper hand. The “V” formed by the thumb and hand should also point somewhere between the right ear and the right shoulder. With both hands in this position, you have a “neutral headed toward strong” grip. *Players have had more success leaning toward a strong grip rather than a weak one.*

**A Misplaced Grip**

Let’s look at what happens if your grip is too strong. In general, a strong grip tends to close the club face, forcing the ball further leftward in relation to the swing path. To compensate for this hooking tendency, your body will tend to “lay or fall back” instead of releasing properly in the follow through. You may also tend to cup your wrist, encouraging a slice.

Your body will try to overcome a faulty grip by contriving a compensating swing motion. The resulting movement will be difficult to duplicate, and your game will suffer.
A Brief Word about the Club

Your golf clubs may also encourage a faulty grip. For example, if the lie angle (the acute angle between the ground and your club’s shaft at address) does not match your swing characteristics, you may tend to adjust your grip in troublesome ways. If the lie angle is too flat for your swing, the toe of the club will tend to hit the ground. This will cause you to send the ball right of target. You will naturally develop a strong grip to overcome this tendency. The opposite is true if your club’s lie angle is too upright.

The grip size of your club is also influential. A grip too large for your hands may cause you to leave the club face open. A grip too small may encourage too much hand motion and a closed club face. Having your grips sized properly for you is not expensive and very beneficial.
A Summary of the Balanced Grip

The grip should be passive and comfortable enough to stay in the same position throughout the swing. It should allow you to keep the club face at 90 degrees (square) at every point along the swing path.

If you notice any change in hand position or hand/wrist manipulations at any point during the swing, you probably have an unsound grip. The hands should simply serve as a soft clamp. The wrists should be like hinges that respond only to inertia.
Faulty Position

Strong Left Hand Grip

Compensation: Hanging back with the body. You may be losing your balance back on your right foot. Falling back can cause you to open the club face at impact and compensate for your strong grip.

Remedy: Practice swinging and landing balanced on your left foot at the finish. Once you hit a few shots moving forward, you should begin hooking the ball. At that point, begin to weaken the grip until you experience straighter ball flight.

Compensation: Extending your left arm high and stiff through the impact area.

Remedy: Begin hitting some shots while intentionally rotating your left forearm through the impact area and immediately bending your left arm. Once you begin hooking some golf shots, slowly begin weakening the grip until you experience straighter ball flight.

Drills: Punch shot drill, extension drill, forearm rollover drill

Faulty Position

Weak Left Hand grip

Compensation: Spinning your shoulders and cutting across the swing path.

Remedy: Strengthen the grip considerably and begin swinging more inside out and rotating the golf club over through the impact position as if you were attempting to put top spin on a tennis shot. Once you start hooking the ball, slowly begin weakening the grip until you experience straighter ball flight.
I find it difficult to get a clear picture of one’s own grip without taking a picture. The view you have looking down at your hands can be deceiving. This is one reason why I recommend gripping the golf club first in front of your face and then setting the golf club at address.

Take a picture of your grip and paste it on this page in the allotted area. To print directly from your computer with the video software just press “function+prtsc”, (you should have a print screen key that may be abbreviated). I also suggest taking a close up picture. If you find discrepancies adjust your grip and take another picture. Monitor your grip constantly. It is you only contact with the golf club and the club face angle.
Faulty Position

Strong Right Hand Grip

Compensation: Hanging back with the body. You may be losing your balance back on your right foot. Falling back can help open the club face at impact and compensate for your strong grip.

Remedy: Practice swinging and landing balanced on your left foot at the finish. Once you hit a few shots moving forward, you should begin hooking the ball. At that point, begin to weaken the grip until you experience straighter ball flight.

Compensation: Extending your left arm high and stiff through the impact area.

Remedy: Begin hitting some shots while intentionally rotating your left forearm through the impact area and immediately bending your left arm. Once you begin hooking some golf shots, slowly begin weakening the grip until you experience straighter ball flight.

Faulty Position

Weak Right Hand Grip

Compensation: Spinning your shoulders and cutting across the swing path.

Remedy: Strengthen the grip considerably and begin swinging more inside out and rotating the golf club over through the impact position. Once you start hooking the ball, slowly begin weakening the grip until you experience straighter ball flight.

Golfers with a weak right grip tend to roll the golf club open on the takeaway. Be very certain you are not committing this very common and important error.
I find it difficult to get a clear picture of one’s own grip without taking a picture. The view you have looking down at your hands can be deceiving. This is one reason why I recommend gripping the golf club first in front of your face and then setting the golf club at address.

Take a picture of your grip and paste it on this page in the allotted area. To print directly from your computer with the video software just press “function+prtsc”, (you should have a print screen key that may be abbreviated). I also suggest taking a close up picture. If you find discrepancies adjust your grip and take another picture. Monitor your grip constantly. It is your only contact with the golf club and the club face angle.

My grip date:__________

My grip date:__________

My grip date:__________

My grip date:__________