

AUSSIE INVENTOR A REAL 'STRAIGHTSHOOTER'

DESPITE describing himself as “just an average bloke” and “average golfer”, Michael Middleton from Orange in country New South Wales is anything but when it comes to his noble desire to help golfers improve.

The 69-year-old boasts a background in human movement, a love of golf and inquisitive mind. Drawing on all three, he has poured his energy and money into the development of the ‘StraightShooter’ – a training aid he calls: “a flexible lead arm guide that aims to help golfers to maintain a straighter lead arm during key parts of the swing, while also allowing the arm to fold correctly in follow-through.”

Middleton might sound like just another keen golfer with an idea but his background in biomechanics (he now runs his own business working in risk management and work health and safety), and his network of investors and advisors gives him a unique pool of knowledge.

And his reasons for trying to improve golfers makes his cause one worth getting behind.

“My dream is that if I could help other people with their health through an activity like golf and build their self-esteem and take a couple of strokes off their handicap, could we have more golfers and could the world be a better place because of something as simple as StraightShooter?” Middleton told *Golf Australia*.

Having set off on the path of inventing the StraightShooter to help his own game, Middleton is now assisted by his son, Phillip, and has teamed up with partners in America, and is well on his way to achieving his dream.

But it was his dealings with sports scientist Ryan Lumsden of Q Golf that truly opened his eyes to the potential scope of his humble invention that is made from neoprene and features two flexible metal rods, which took nine months to develop.

Lumsden came to Middleton's attention through former PGA of Australia CEO Max Garske, and as well as allowing Middleton to see the full range of StraightShooter's applications encouraged a Trackman and 3D testing based study with 25 Orange golfers. This resulted in accuracy and distance improvements for 83 and 60 percent of testers respectively.

“I guess I just saw value in it, if you're helping golfers you'll use whatever means you can to help them understand what they've got to do better. I just saw value in the device in terms of being able to give a golfer more awareness of how their arm needed to move but also give them some awareness around some of the body structure that you needed to go with it,” Lumsden said of what led him to become involved with StraightShooter.

The next step in Middleton's mission is to produce and sell the StraightShooter, with a

six-week crowd funding campaign through Kickstarter having commenced on March 13.

While the training aid might eventually earn him a decent financial return, Middleton's commitment and positive outlook means he has enjoyed the experience of potentially creating the next big thing in golf training aids regardless.

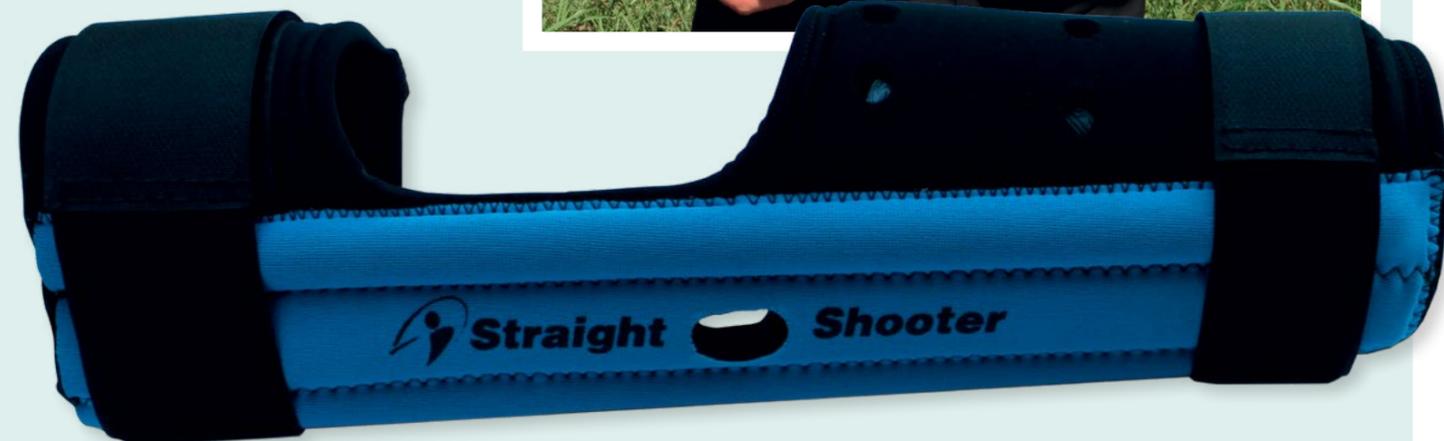
“If it didn't happen I could still write a lovely book, like a little story about how it all went,” he said. “This is my life at the moment.

“Golf is a game out in the wonderful environment you can get into. That, plus some physical activity and you're hitting the golf ball better, can we turn out better people by using StraightShooter? And I think we can.”

The StraightShooter is set to retail for US\$149.99. Find out more about the ‘StraightShooter’ on www.kickstarter.com or visit www.buystraightshooter.com



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