

# **GOLF - How To Begin...**

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## **WHY GOLF?**

Golf is a game that is imbedded in the culture of business because it is accessible to a wide range of participants. It can be handicapped in an inclusive fashion, and does not differentiate between gender, race, culture, age or corporate rank.

Golf offers a great variety of venues and is enjoyed world wide in unique environments. Every golf course is different. If played on the same course frequently, the experience is always changing due to weather and the complex variables at work during the round.

## **HOW TO START**

Golf is not a microwave game, and we encourage as much preparation as possible before embarking on a round. If you are jumping in with minimal experience, a scramble event is the best way to get started. It offers the least pressure and the best chance to contribute.

*(A scramble is played by competing groups. Each player in your group hits, then every player moves their ball to the point of the best shot.)*

As a beginner, if you are playing your own ball and it is a non-competitive event, it is OK to pick up your ball, watch your fellow competitors then proceed to the next hole so as to keep the pace of play moving if you are having difficulty completing a hole. Those who have played before will appreciate this courtesy and provide useful encouragement.

## **RESOURCES**

There are a great many books of golf instruction on the market. We will provide some basic information in this handout, but for deeper exploration you can visit your local bookstore or go online for a list of resources. In the beginning, look for the most simple and fundamental resources.

## **BASICS**

*All the information below is for a person playing right handed. If you are left handed reverse the instructions.*

**Your instructor will help you with the following components.**

## **GRIP**

The left hand goes on first in a shake hands style, with the left thumb resting on the right side of the shaft. The club rests in the fingers more than the palm of the left hand.

The right hand goes below the left on the shaft with the right palm over the left thumb.

The right thumb rests on the left side of the shaft. The method of connecting hands is by overlapping or interlocking the small finger of the right hand between the index and middle finger of the left hand. If you choose not to connect the hands, the pinkie of the right can rest against the index finger of the left hand on the shaft of the club in a ten finger or baseball grip.

## **STANCE**

Imagine railroad tracks with the ball on one track and your toes on the other. The tracks are running to your target. Your distance from the ball will depend on the length of your club. Your arms will hang more or less vertically from your shoulders in a tension free fashion. You will take a posture similar to a quarterback in American Football. Your knees will be bent and your hips will be pulled back.

## **SWING**

The body mass will transfer from the center to the inside of the right leg by rotating the shoulder. You will then swing through the ball and finish with your weight on your left foot and your right heel up in the air. The fastest speed is in the area of impact. Any premature fast movement will cause a loss of distance. Maintaining the same posture throughout is helpful, with some straightening after impact.

## **PUTTING**

For a ball to go in the hole, a putt needs only two things: the right distance, and the right direction. Distance is controlled by the length and speed of the stroke. Direction is controlled by face angle and path.

- Practice Strokes: Spend more time looking at the target than the putter on your practice strokes
- Even the world's greatest golfers don't read every putt correctly.
- The most important putt is the next putt.

- Use creative rather than descriptive language to describe your putting....
  - “I’m a poor putter” is descriptive language.
  - “I’m becoming a better putter” is creative language.
- Putting is more art than science
- The best putting lesson is “go putt”

**Recommended reading** -- “*Putting out of your mind*” by Dr. Bob Rotella

## **CHIPPING AND PITCHING**

Loosely defined, chipping is a shot that will roll farther than it flies and pitching is a shot that will fly farther than it rolls.

These shots are executed with more lofted clubs as a rule. A pitching wedge or sand wedge is usually used for a pitch shot and 7 iron, 8 iron, 9 iron, and pitching wedge are often used for a chip shot.

On these shots the weight favors the *left side* at address and the motion is a pendulum - like motion. The tempo is constant, no acceleration or deceleration.

By hitting down on the ball and brushing some grass, you cause the ball to go up. It is not necessary to make a lifting motion in the area of the ball. It is a descending blow that will help it go up.

If there is one fundamental for this shot that is more important than all others, it is to maintain a stable left wrist position through impact and follow through. Do not let the wrist hinge or bend.

## **A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF TERMS:**

**A Round** – 18 holes of golf

**Address** – The position you take before swinging the club

**Backswing** – The first part of the swing, where you take the club back and away

**Ball mark** – a small indent on the green where a ball has landed. Repaired with a small tool called a “repair tool.”

**Belly Putter** – long handled putter that requires placement against the stomach for stability

**Birdie** – One shot less than par on a hole.

**Bogey** – One shot more than par on a hole.

**Bogey-Train** – A fun term to describe a run of Bogies on consecutive holes.

**Bunker** – A sand hazard placed on fairways or beside greens. As a hazard, you cannot ground your club on the sand before hitting the ball.

**Chip** – a small, low shot around the green when roll exceeds flight.

**Club Pro** – every PGA course must have a teaching professional

**Cup** – The formal term for the actual hole.

**Divot** – a chunk of dirt removed during a shot, most often by an iron or wedge.

**Draw** – A shot that curves gently left, for a right-handed golfer.

**Dress Code** – A standard of dress required to play – almost every course insists on a collared shirt and sensible shorts, or you will not be permitted to play.

**Drive** – A long tee shot – the first shot on a Par 4 or Par 5 hole.

**Driver** – A one wood, used on longer shots from the tee and rarely from the fairway

**Etiquette** – Expected common courtesies between players during a round – mostly, keep still when others are hitting – be ready to play when it's your turn.

**Eighteen** – an informal name for a round of golf

**Fade** – A shot that curves gently to the right for a right hand golfer.

**Fairway** – The closely cut grass on a golf hole, stretching between the tee and the green.

**Fat shot** – A shot where the ground is hit before the ball.

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**Finish** – The posed position at the end of the swing.

**Fringe** – The slightly longer grass that surrounds the green.

**Green** – Tightly cut putting surface surrounding the cup.

**Greens Fees** – the cost of playing a round – commonly ranges from \$20 to \$80 – but can be significantly more at famous courses.

**Hazard** – A bunker, water, or red-staked penalty area. Grounding a club is not permitted.

**Honor** – The right to hit first because of a lower score on the preceding hole or holes.

**Hook** – A shot that curves aggressively to the left for a right hand golfer.

**Iron** – Accurate grooved-faced clubs angled to control distance. The higher the number of the iron, the higher the loft, and the shorter distance the ball will travel.

**Marker** – a coin or small, flat indicator placed behind a ball on the green, so the ball can be removed for cleaning, and to avoid blocking another player's shot.

**Metal Wood** – a modern replacement for woods – with a club head designed to hit the ball greater distances than irons, but with potentially decreased accuracy.

**Mulligan** – A “do-over” free shot, usually taken on the first hole if the group allows after an errant drive. Informal and against strict rules of golf.

**Nine Holes** – a course offering only 9 holes, or half a round

**Out Of Bounds** – the area beyond white stakes – penalty is stroke and distance.

**Par** – The expected shot total on a hole, determined by distance from tee to the flag.

**PGA** – Professional Golfers of America

**Pitch** – a short, high shot where ball flight exceeds roll.

**Rough** – the longer grass that lines a fairway.

**Shank** -- A ball that strikes the “shank” of the club, and darts right – often requires psychological treatment if repeated frequently.

**Slice** – A shot that curves aggressively to the right for a right handed golfer – perhaps the most common swing error.

**Tee** – A small wooden object for elevating a ball on the teeing ground. And, the name of the hitting area at the start of every hole. (Also called the “Tee Box”)

