

# Golf Basics

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Golf has seen an incredible rise in popularity over the past few decades, and that popularity continues to grow. From the days when golf was considered the pastime of a select few old folks who walked the greens in their checked pants, the sport today has a tremendous following. It can largely be attributed to players like Tiger Woods – charismatic players who captured the attention of everyone, including those who have never picked up a golf club. Added to this is Hollywood's take with movies that have portrayed golfers as the heroes they are.

While the following has changed significantly, so has the industry. There are resorts, vacation packages and even housing developments built around incredible golf courses. Finding a great place to golf has never been easier with the number of courses growing annually and those managing the courses set to make the most of the property available. There's no way to really tell what prompted the rising popularity of the sport. But if you look at the number of young people walking the greens with parents and grandparents, and the number of schools with a golf program for its students, you'll see that it's most likely a trend that will continue for the foreseeable future.

## **The History of Golf**

Arguably golf's interesting origin began five centuries in the past. It is a historical fact that due to the interference of golf with much more serious combat drills James II of Scotland banned golf in an act of Parliament on March 6 in the year 1457. There is general agreement among historians and golf fans alike that the Scots were the first golfers who became somewhat addicted to the sport. However the persons responsible for the invention of golf is open to debate. And debate will ensue if you breach the subject with the right persons.

It has been suggested that bored shepherders became quite exceptional at knocking round shaped stones into rabbit holes with their wooden shepherds staffs. Making a competitive game of the boredom seemed inevitable. After all women's lib was not yet even considered so that means the shepherds were men. Lets face another fact of history, men tend to be more of a competitive nature. Various forms of golf were played as early as the fourteenth century. These games were played in Holland, Belgium, France as well as in Scotland, thus the debate of golf's origin is rightly fueled.

There is another historical fact that Scottish Baron, James VI, was the man who delivered the game we know today as golf to the English. For many years the game was played on severely rugged terrain, where no proper upkeep was required. In most accounts golf was played with crudely cut holes in the ground where the earth was reasonably flat.

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It was a group of Edinburgh golfers who first formed an organized club. In 1744 the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers was established. At this time in history the first thirteen laws of golf were drawn up for an annual competition. This first competition consisted of players from any part of Great Britain or Ireland.

One of the earliest golf clubs that were formed outside golf's debatable native home of Scotland was the Royal Blackheath Golf Club of England. Blackheath came into existence in 1766 and the Old Manchester Golf Club was founded on the Kersal Moor in 1818.

By the late 1800's the Royal Montreal Club and the Quebec Golf Club were to become the first in North America. It wasn't until 1888 that golf resurfaced in the United States with more fervor than each prior surfacing. Even then it was a Scotsman, John Reid, who first built a three-hole course in Yonkers New York. St. Andrews Club of Yonkers was built in a thirty-acre site near to the original three-hole course.

From the hesitant and fitful start golf grew rapidly as the new national pastime in America. Modern for its time the golf club, Shinnecock Hills was founded in 1891 and in the nine years left in that century more than one thousand prestigious golf clubs opened in North America.

The historical value of golf is as interesting as any part of our heritage. Following the path that golf took to get from a shepherds field to the amazing golf courses that dot our culture today it is no wonder golf remains a popular pastime in all parts of the world.

### **A Good Golf Bag is a Beautiful Thing**

Few things are more important to a golfer than a good golf bag. First off, golf bags come in many styles and a wide variety of colors. You can choose a bag for style, features or pick a color to match your mood.

Some have legs that fold out when they are placed on the ground and stand upright so the golfer doesn't have to bend down and pick it up. That's a nice feature in golf bags, especially if the golfer tends to walk the course, as many do. There is plenty of bending to be done when a golfer is trying to remove an obstacle from around his or her ball, or to get the ball out of the cup, so any way to avoid bending over is more than appreciated.

All golf bags have compartments where the golf clubs are to be placed. Each golfer has his or her own way of doing this and putting clubs where he or she wants them. Some golfers, though, are lazy and just stick their clubs in the compartments, grabbing whichever one they want when a particular club is needed. But, some golf bags have

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tubes to protect the club grips. These are nice to have. With the tubes, a golfer can get his or her clubs out easier. The clubs are never tangled up, and the grips last a lot longer.

Another important factor in choosing a golf bag is the number of pockets it has. Frankly, there's no such thing as too many pockets in a golf bag. First, one of the pockets will be used to hold the golf bag's hood. The hood is used to keep the clubs and bag from getting drenched when it rains. Another pocket will be used to keep extra towels (believe it or not, extra towels are important in the summer to keep the sweat off the brow and out of the eyes, along with keeping the hands relatively dry. Then, there is the pocket used for keeping the extra golf tees and possibly the divot tool. Finally, a pocket is needed for the golf balls themselves, and it doesn't hurt to have a pocket to carry another dozen balls in, just in case.

Some courses are so difficult it is easy to lose a lot of balls during 18-holes of play. This makes having an extra box of balls around a good thing, but there has to be somewhere in the golf bag to keep them, which means another pocket.

Imagine trying to play golf without a bag. The golfer would be constantly stooping over picking up clubs, tees, balls, towels and the divot tool. Then he or she would have to walk to the ball, drop all of the clubs and stuff, select a club, hit the ball, and start the process all over again. It would be a major pain in the neck, and would make it nearly impossible to finish playing a round of golf. So, golf bags are an essential part of the game of golf.

## **Are Golf Lessons For You?**

If you've been thinking about taking up golf, or if you're a golfer in search of a better game, you may have considered golf lessons. But are golf lessons really beneficial? And how do you find a pro who will offer good advice?

There are some who swear that lessons are vital and others who say that practice is the only thing that will improve your golf game. The truth seems to lie somewhere in the middle. But before you drop your coach or sign up for lessons, consider what it is that you hope golf lessons will accomplish. Outlining your goals may help you decide whether you truly need lessons or simply more time on the course.

If you play with others who play exceptionally well, you may want to find someone to give you some help with your game. Whether that's a paid coach or merely a friend who plays well is strictly a personal choice. Getting some pointers and tips may be a good way to ensure that you don't totally embarrass yourself in front of other players.

If you're serious about the game, you've probably been involved long enough that you don't need advice on whether to get a coach. But if you've only recently discovered the

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joy of golfing, you may find yourself looking for a way to improve your game. Golf lessons could very well be the answer.

Some people say that lessons give them a set time to practice and an opportunity to completely focus on the game. You'll typically be less interrupted than if you were playing on your own, stopping to chat with friends along the way. But others say the simple fact of having someone scrutinizing every move and offering constant advice is more distracting than helpful. Decide whether you're one of those who accept direction and works well in that situation. That's a major clue as to whether golf lessons are a good idea.

Remember that a golf coach's job is to teach you to golf correctly. That means that there are some habits that he (or she) will be trying to ingrain and others they'll be trying to break. While golfing correctly is a terrific goal, many golfers have some bad habits that they tout as benefiting their game. Changing your grip, adjusting your stance or even using different equipment may be among the "must do" list from your coach. You may resist those changes. You have two options. You can do your best to follow the instructions, or you can explain that you aren't planning to change that particular habit. If you don't plan to change, you may need to reexamine your decision to take lessons. Without following directions, lessons may become a waste of time and effort on both parts, and money on yours.

Golf lessons are great for some people. It's a personal decision whether you are one of those who will benefit from a coach – formal or informal. But remember that the most important thing to improve your golf game is simply practice.

### **Are Golf Shoes Really Necessary?**

While some kind of footwear is required on most golf courses, are golf shoes really necessary? This is a question to be answered by each individual golfer as it is his or her feet we are talking about.

Some courses require soft spikes only so the course doesn't get chewed up with the walking around people have to do when playing, especially if the people are walking the entire course. And, most club houses will only allow soft spikes to be worn inside, to protect the carpet.

Let us be honest with one another, the vast majority of golf shoes are not attractive footwear. But, golf shoes are far from being the ugliest footwear in sports. That honor, dubious though it may be, belongs entirely to bowling shoes. Who, in their right mind, would want to wear red and green shoes, especially that type of shoes? At least golf shoes

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are designed in a more practical, and somewhat more attractive, manner. But, are they really needed in order for a person to play golf?

No, they are not. The footwear a golfer chooses to wear can be practically anything from moccasins to a good athletic shoe. A golfer's footwork is more important than his or her choice in footwear.

But, the shoe a golfer wears should be comfortable on his or her feet. There is nothing worse for a golfer than an uncomfortable shoe. If the toes are pinched, or the back rides up on the heel, the golfer will be miserable and will not be able to concentrate on playing golf, which is why he or she is on the golf course in the first place.

So, comfort comes first. After comfort, traction is important. This is because the golfer can't have their feet turning after they have struck the ball. If this happens, the ball will careen wildly, most likely winding up as a major league slice or hook. The ball, though, will not go where the golfer had planned to hit it.

Should a golfer choose to forego golf shoes for another type of footwear, he or she should think about the type of shoe he or she wants to wear on the links. They should then examine the tread pattern on the bottom of the shoe. If the bottom of the shoe is slick, with no pattern at all, it would be a good idea to leave these shoes behind as there will be little, if any traction, and none at all if the course is wet, either from rain or dew.

What is the best type of tread pattern? Again, this will be up to the individual golfer and his or her preferences. For some, the old tire tread pattern (used on the sole of a lot of boots and sandals) works well. This type of shoe sole will provide traction for the golfer. Some may prefer a circular pattern of sole, while others may like something entirely different.

The most important thing, though, is for the golfer to be comfortable and confident with the shoes being worn when playing. In fact, the less a golfer thinks about shoes when playing is a good thing.

## **Cleaning Your Golf Clubs**

You and your golf clubs have been through a lot together: the four person benefit scramble, the company tournament and weekends of enjoyment. They become an integral part of your life so it makes sense to take good care of them. Golf club maintenance is easy and adds years of life to your set by simply keeping them clean.

All you will need is a bucket, some mild dish liquid (not the kind used for automatic dishwashers), an old toothbrush, and some soft towels. It helps to do the cleaning outside

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so you can rinse them with a water hose, but you may choose to clean them in a bathroom or utility room if the clubs are not too dirty.

First, pour a few drops of dish liquid in the bucket. Add warm water and briskly swish your hand back and forth in the bucket to create warm, sudsy water. Don't fill the bucket too full. You want the water to cover the heads of your golf clubs, but not much else.

Put your irons into the bucket of warm, sudsy water. Use a cloth to "bathe" them. It is that simple! Once you have given the clubs a simple wash down, get the toothbrush and scrub the heads to remove dirt from the grooves. Depending on how dirty your clubs are, this might take a little effort and some elbow grease.

Once you have washed your golf clubs and cleaned their grooves, you will need to rinse them. A sprayer works great so if you are outside, simply hose off the soap and dirt with the outdoor water hose. Indoors, use the shower. You can simply run them under a faucet inside, too. No matter how you choose to rinse the clubs, make sure you dry them well.

Use another clean cloth and dry the club. Make sure it dries completely to avoid spots and damage.

Clean the handles and any wood work on the golf clubs with a dampened cloth. It is safest not to ever submerge golf club wood work into water. The water might damage the coloring, protective coat or the wood itself.

While your clubs are out, clean out your bag. A quick wipe down of the bag's interior with a damp cloth is generally all the inside needs. Follow up with a wipe down using a dry cloth. Spot clean the outside of your bag after each golf outing as needed. Once the clubs have been individually washed and dried, return them to the clean bag.

If you think it is silly to wash and dry your golf clubs, look around next time you are at the course. Make note of how many other golfers are playing with clean clubs. They take care of them because the clubs are an instrumental tool of the sport, just like cleaning a gun after a hunting session or target practice.

When you take good care of your golf clubs after each outing, you'll be ready to hit the greens for your next tee time!

### **Customized and Personalized Golf**

You can have any number of personally detailed golf accessories. Customized golf equipment, accessories or paraphernalia is a wonderful gift ideal for the golfer in your life. It is also a wonderful purchase for your own golf needs. Golf clubs alone have some original accessories that are easily found and made more special with personal touches.

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The idea of personalizing golf equipment can begin with the golf bag that carries the precious cargo of your clubs. Monograms stitched into the leather or canvas is an unobtrusive way to show ownership and also to personalize. Using monogrammed golf towels or using golf balls with your name on them is a great way to personalize the golf scene without being tacky or presumptuous. And you never know when a large bag of discount personalized golf tees could really come in handy.

Golf clubs with the owners name engraved in them is the beginning of a long list of wonderful personalized and customized golf equipment. Needing golf clubs that vary from the ordinary in height, length or strength is what customizing is all about. You will discover there is a whole retail world out there that thrives on customization. Golf clubs are indeed just the beginning.

Golf apparel is no exception to the personal side of golf. Comfortable and affordable clothes, shoes, hats and umbrellas are just a few of the enormous choices available for personalized golf. With discount and wholesale golf apparel shops offering every affordable style is made available to the golfing public there is no reason not to be original in your appearance on the golf course.

So many great gift ideas come to mind when you think about customizing and personalizing golf equipment. Head covers can boast the family crest or they can even be a knitted gift from your teenage daughters for your birthday. Either way they are equally cherished for their unique sentimental value.

Customizing your vacation to include a home rented in advance in Augusta, Georgia for a personal view of the Masters can be an amazing way to show your loyalty to the sport of golf. Being up close and personal to such an event is something planned well in advance and could be in some cases a once in a lifetime occurrence. Customized and personalized can go hand in hand and need not be so expensive. Creating your own tournament for a good cause is always a fun project for the entire family or helpful organization.

Customizing your golf accessories can range from the practical to the outrageous. Installing seat warmers or air conditioners in your golf car might seem a little extravagant to some people. If you are serious about your golf these accessories and customizations are deemed a necessity. A seat warmer or range finder may seem trivial in comparison to some extravagant examples. Golf cars that look like the SUV in your driveway may seem a little excessive. If you have the money to indulge in such luxuries than so be it. Who said a Rolls Royce golf car was over the top?

## **Drivers - Not Just for Chauffeuring You Around**

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In golf, the driver is also known as the 1 wood. Normally it's the longest club in the bag and has the largest head. This club is used to hit the ball off the tee out of the box, which is where the ball is teed up to start playing a hole. Of course, on a short par 3 hole, the driver would be left in the bag, and another club would be selected, unless the golfer just had a hankering to fly the green and blow any chance at making a birdie or par.

Now, it should be noted that the club known as the driver is not something that can be used to literally drive someone around. If anyone put this club behind the wheel of their car and climbed into the back seat expecting to be chauffeured to a specific destination, or just driven around in general, they will have a very, very, very long wait. After all, it is a golf club, not someone who gets paid to drive cars. It does not have arms or legs, nor does it have eyes or ears. You will note there was no mention of a brain, but that is because there are so many people on the road who also do not appear to have a functioning brain while they are driving.

On the other hand, a driver (the golf club) is a great way to get the ball down the links on the golf course. A well hit ball can travel more than three hundred yards. However, this kind of driving power is most often seen on the Professional Golf Association (PGA) tour. The average golfer is doing well to hit the ball two hundred and fifty to two hundred and seventy five yards off the tee and these are not drives to be ashamed of.

There is no set average distance for holes on the golf course, which makes driving on different courses a major challenge, in some cases. Some par 4 holes can be as short as two hundred and eighty five yards, while others can be closer to five hundred yards in length. Either way, a well hit drive is required to do well in the game of golf.

The basic idea of driving the golf ball is to keep the ball in the fairway, out of the rough, avoiding sand traps, and most definitely staying away from any water hazards the course may have to offer. This concept, though, is easier said than done. After all, the least little thing can affect the golfer's concentration. This can result in the ball being, toed, or hit off the front of the driver, or heeled, which is when the ball is hit off the back part of the driver. Those are bad things.

Toeing a drive will send the ball sharply to the right if the golfer is right handed, or to the left if the golfer is a southpaw. Consequently, a drive hit off the heel of the club will go left for the right handed player and right for the lefty.

### **Getting Ready to Play Starts at the Driving Range**

All golf courses, reputable ones anyway, have driving ranges. This has nothing to do with the maneuverability of a golf cart, but the player practicing shots and getting loosened up for a round on the links.

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The driving range is the best place to practice a new shot or technique that the golfer has heard about but has not tried as of yet. It is never a good idea for the golfer to attempt a new shot, or a new grip on the golf course. This is because a muffed shot, and those are easy to hit, can cause the golfer to lose faith in the stroke, the club or the grip he or she was using. Therefore, it is always best to work on the shot at the driving range before ever considering trying it on the course.

Every golfer has his or her own way of getting ready to play when they go to the driving range. For some, the idea is to take the smaller clubs, such as the pitching wedge, hit a few balls to get loosened up, then hit with larger and larger clubs, finishing up the workout with the woods. But, for others, he or she will start with the larger clubs, getting their stroke down with the driver and woods first, then working their way to the smaller clubs, such as the pitching and sand wedge. For others, though, they will take one particular club to work on. This is normally done when a golfer is having problems hitting this club regularly.

By using only one club, the golfer has to focus on what they are doing with it. Are they gripping the club in a comfortable manner that will allow their wrists to be flexible on the follow through? Or, is their stance too closed or too open? This can have an adverse affect on a shot, with a closed stance preventing the golfer from getting the distance he or she thinks he or she should get with this particular club. A stance too wide open will affect the golfer's balance and, therefore, the accuracy of the shot. These are some of the things a golfer will work on at the driving range.

But, then again, there is always the new tip that is guaranteed to increase both the length of a shot and the accuracy of the shot (and there's also oceanfront property in Oklahoma for those interested in making such a purchase). A lot of these so-called "tips" are ways for someone else to make money from golfing equipment or videos. Still, there are some tips that are legitimate and will help. Regardless, all tips should be tried out on the driving range before the golfer ever thinks about stepping up to the tee on the first box.

Remember, though, the driving range is not for all terrain vehicles, four wheel drive pickups, monster trucks, or to see how sharp a golf cart can be turned. A driving range is a place where golfers go to get ready for their game and try new tips.

## **Getting a Grip on Golf Terminology**

Regardless of how much you've played golf, you're probably going to hear some new terminology every time you're golfing with a new group or working with a new

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instructor. The way to save face is to simply nod like you know exactly what they're talking about, even when they're touting new words. The smart thing to do is ask.

Even a casual golfer knows words like bogey, slice and approach. But did you know that balata is that rubbery substance that covers a golf ball? Here are a few terms that may be less well known to some golfers.

A chunk is that boo-boo of hitting the ground behind the ball – way behind the ball. The word came about because the chunk of grass (the divot) that flies up can sometimes travel a longer distance than the ball. When it's done on purpose – as from a sand bunker – the resulting shot is called an explosion. When the ball is really buried in that sand, it's known as a fried egg.

A top shot is when you simply hit too high on the ball. One of the most common causes is that you've hit several chunks and you're trying to compensate. When you hit a top shot, the ball will have little or no loft. If you're already in a sand trap, you're likely to stay there for another shot. If there's one directly in front of you, a top shot will probably net you a fried egg.

A Mulligan is the same as a “do over” from your childhood days! This is when you aren't satisfied with your first shot and you simply pull another ball from your bag and start over. Typically, a Mulligan can only happen when you're playing alone or with very forgiving friends because few golfers are going to let an opponent have a free “do over.”

Yips is a word used to denote the inability to complete a putt with a slow, steady movement. For various reasons, the golfer instead makes a sudden, jerky swing, usually causing the putt to go wild.

The address is commonly known as that moment that the golfer steps up to the ball. What some don't realize is that USGA rules say that the address has occurred once the golfer has rested the club behind the ball.

Nassau is a popular way of competing, especially for those who are something less than professional minded. In this game, golfers have one score for the first nine holes they play and a separate score for the back nine, as well as an overall score for the entire round. That means that golfers have three scores to compare, upping the odds of winning something!

There are other terms that you should know as well. The grain refers to the way the grass angles, similar to the grain of fabric. Loft is the angle of the face of the club. Dormie means that the person with the lower score can't hope for anything more than a tie.

Learning the terminology isn't necessary to playing a good game, but it probably is necessary to enjoying play with friends.

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## **Gifts For The Female Golfer**

Ladies golf is fact becoming the thing women do in their spare time. It is no wonder why it is such a popular sport. Whether you have a lady golfer in your life or you are one, there are many unique and customized lady golfer accessories from which to choose.

When it comes to clubs. Balls and tees the female flair for pretty things is not lost. Flower shaped golf tees may actually seem a little over the top to some but others may find that to be just what they had in mind. A feminine grip for golf clubs would in some cases be much smaller than the males so this is another area where the lady style would accommodate and flatter the female golfer. Perhaps golf balls that were pink might seem just the thing for a lady golfer, however using any color or type golf ball is also an option.

Apparel is probably the one place where most women golfers might stand out and not share a commonality with their male counterparts. When looking for a great gift for the lady golfer in your life look no further than the latest in golf apparel. You will find a number of shades and brand names with loose fitting comfortable front stretch or front pleated shorts available. There will also be many comfortable blouse styles certain to fit the taste of every lady golfer. Front stretch skorts are also a big hit. And don't forget that cropped pants or a stretch slack in the cooler weather is ideal golf apparel.

From thermal outerwear to open and breezy styles you will find just your style available for every type of weather. Certain name brands are exclusive to the lady golfer and worn proudly. Good solid golf shoes are also vastly important accessories to any golf game. Replacement spikes and spike cleaners are found in any pro shop and for any type of cleat or spike. You may wish to purchase a wrench kit to make spike replacement more simple and fast. And suede shoe bags are a fashion statement as well as a distinct means of keeping the golf course out of the trunk of your car.

Adding the feminine colors is not the only way to make golf accessories for women stand in a unique light. There is also a style unique to the lady golf accessories. Women's golf gloves, hats, and visors are also a great gift idea. Sunglasses that block UV rays and prevent unnecessary glare are a wonderful gift idea. Golf towels and head covers can be personalized in any number of ways. Golf bags and luggage accessories for women can also be personalized.

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Golf jewelry can be found. Rhinestone letter charms and any number of golf related charms are always a great gift for the lady golfer. Gift certificates can be purchased in any increment and make excellent gifts for the golfer who has everything. Gifts can be purchased at any number of online or real time accessory shops in the world.

### **Golf – More than a Walk Through the Pasture**

Mark Twain once wrote playing golf was a good way to spoil a walk through the pasture. The inimitable Mr. Twain, from this statement, could be believed not to be a golfer. After all, there is more to golfing than just walking through a pasture.

First and foremost, golf is a way to either work out stress and frustration, or, for many, to get even more stressed out and frustrated. It can be the most infuriating game ever played or invented, or the most fun. And, no two trips to the golf course will ever be the same, regardless of how good a player someone is.

This is because the weather conditions are never identical, and weather does play a big part in golf. The more intelligent golfers will not go near the course in a thunderstorm, but there are a few brave, and foolhardy, souls who will brave the elements just to play. The wind also plays a major factor in golf, as the wind will affect the way the ball travels. When hit, golf balls have spin. The spin can be enhanced by the wind, causing the ball to drift away from its intended target. Therefore, the golfer has to take the wind into consideration and plan his or her shot accordingly.

Golf is also a good form of exercise, for those golfers who walk the course. A good course is about two miles around, so playing eighteen holes is roughly equivalent to walking four miles. Any doctor will tell you that such a walk can only be beneficial to the walker's heart and lungs.

Additionally, playing golf is good for getting out of the house and being outdoors. Golfers can enjoy the sun and wind note the beauty of the nature they're surrounded by, as the majority of courses are well landscaped and quite pleasing to the eye. Golfers can also watch squirrels and rabbits on the course, sometimes, and take pleasure in the antics of these creatures. This also helps free the golfer from thinking about the mistake he or she made on the last shot or previous hole, calming them down and getting them ready for their next shot.

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For others, however, playing golf is a great way to beat stress. After all, a golf course is about the only place a person can knock the crap out of something, not only not get in trouble for hitting something, but being praised and rewarded by knocking the crap out of the ball well. How perfect is that?

Golf is also a game of honor. Surprised? Don't be. After all, golf is the only game where a person can call a penalty on themselves, and those who play with honor do. Of course, there are the jerks who claim to play golf, but wouldn't think of calling a penalty on anything they've done. Their scores, though, are meaningless, and this kind of behavior will also show up in their day to day lives.

### **Golf Accessories – What's Hot, What's Not**

As with any sport golf has diverse and useful personal accessories. Whether you are searching for a gift to give your favorite golfer or you are in need of an accessory to make your own golfing experience more effective and pleasant there are many accessories from which to choose. Every price range is available and millions of products can be found in several diverse venues.

Every aspect of the game of golf has it's own unique set of accessories from which to choose. Just your golf clubs alone can require various accessories. There are cleaning kits for golf clubs. Golf clubs can be fitted with head covers to protect your investment in quality clubs. Head covers can vary greatly from funny animal shapes to serious covers monogrammed with a family crest. Golf club grips can also be diverse. There are your everyday universal grips and you can also find some very expensive custom fit grips for any golf clubs.

Golf tees and balls are accessories that leave nothing to the imagination. Think again, there are so many choices in tees and balls it is mind-boggling. There are inexpensive bags of discount generic golf tees available. And you can also find personalized golf tees in ever color imaginable. There are rubber tees and brush tees. Brush tees claim to give you increased accuracy and are also touted to last longer than normal wooden ones. Golf balls can be found in various colors and with any number of claims to their accuracy. There will always be times when golf accessories will be chosen strictly because of a personal preference as opposed to what the manufacturer claims it might do.

When considering accessories for the golfer in your life or for your own purchase you can choose from a wide variety of sunglasses, caps or visors. Depending on where you live or what climate in which you play golf you may need more than one of these particular accessories. Wrap around sunglasses as well as the UV protectant lenses can cut glare in many cases up to one hundred percent. With a clear view your golfing accuracy will be much improved. Umbrellas will also come in handy in sunshine or in rain.

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What would any golfer do with out his favorite (and sometimes lucky) golf towel hanging on his bag? There are any number of logos and brand name golf towels sold. Golf towels serve not only a utilitarian purpose but they are also a way to personalize your game. Ball cleaners can be found in accessory shops along with a wide variety of maintenance products for every level of golfer out there.

Ball retrievers are yet another accessory that proves to remain a useful accessory for any golfer. Here again you will find generic ball retrievers that work efficiently and are affordable or you can give a personalized ball retriever in any style to the golfer on your Holiday gift list.

### **Golf Balls – The First Piece of Basic Equipment**

No matter how good a golfer may be, he or she will not be any good at all without golf balls. Granted, it is a no-brainer that golfers need to have golf balls in order to play. But, the question is, which golf balls are the best.

This is a sticky situation and depends almost entirely the individual golfer and his or her tastes, what he or she expects out of the ball, and, quite frankly, how much money he or she wants to spend.

There are golfers out there who will play with nothing but one brand of ball. No matter what else happens, they will only and always use this particular brand. What these balls cost is irrelevant to them. It is this ball or no golf. Yes, this going to the extremes, but, let's face it, there are people in this world who prefer living life at the extreme edge of sanity.

Now, let's get down to some common sense when it comes to the golf ball. We shall start with the beginning golfer. The beginner needs to forget what he or she may have heard about any brand or type of golf ball, what it does and how far it goes. Beginning golfers are going to lose a lot of golf balls. They need to think more about price than quality. The beginning golfer needs to purchase "been around" balls, which are balls sold in bulk (around 50 to a bag), that have been found on golf courses and recycled, for lack of a better word.

OK, these used golf balls are more often than not name brand balls, but this does not matter. The beginning golfer, in learning how to hit the ball straight, keep it in the fairway, out of the woods and water, will go through dozens, if not hundreds of golf balls. Therefore, the logical thing for the beginning golfer to do is buy in bulk.

As the golfer gets better, the best idea would be to move up to a better grade of ball. This, though, does not mean to rush out to the nearest golfing supply house and buy the most

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expensive ball on the shelves. Again, think about the price of the ball and the level of your skill.

If a player has a tendency to slice the ball, or tends to top the ball (this is where the club head hits the top of the ball. While it gives the ball a lot of top spin, the ball does not travel far, and tends to be gashed by the club), stick with cheap balls. This does not mean stay with the bulk recycled balls, but inexpensive new ones.

In theory, players get better the more they play. As the skill level increases, the golfer can experiment with different brands of golf balls, checking to see which ones he or she may like the best. And, a lot of thought should be given to the type of course the golfer will be using these balls on.

### **Golf Clubs – The Perfect Fit**

If you think any old golf clubs will do, you haven't been on the course trying to compensate for a club that's simply too long or too short. Besides making a shambles of your golf game, ill-fitting clubs can leave your body aching after the game. If you're spending all your time compensating, you probably aren't shooting your best or even enjoying the time on the course.

So does that mean that you're going to spend hundreds of extra dollars on a set of clubs with a custom fit? While custom clubs are one answer, most people can find what they need from a well-stocked golf store. But there are some things to keep in mind.

Length of the club is important, but it's not everything. The pros say that the size of your golf club's grip should be comfortable for your hands. That's why clubs for younger players and women often have a smaller grip.

If you should decide to go for a set of custom clubs, what is the process? It's nothing like be measured for a suit. The point is not only to make the club reach from the point of your outstretched hand to the ground, but also to make the most of your body – your strengths and your weaknesses. So don't go for your custom golf club fitting session expecting to spread your arms and stand still while someone uses a tape measure.

A good custom fit will probably take place both inside and outside. The best custom fit clubs will be tailored so that your swing is taken into account. Sound expensive? Possibly.

While some major golf club manufacturers will charge (dearly) for the actual "fitting," many offer up this service for free, with your commitment to buy clubs from that company. While custom clubs are more expensive than clubs purchased "off the shelf" from your local golf supplier or even from an outlet store or individual, the results will probably show themselves right away on the golf course.

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Consider the shots that you may have been compensating for all your years of playing golf. If you're taller or shorter than the "typical" golfer, or even if you have some muscle strengths or weaknesses that make your game a bit more of a challenge, custom clubs can help you compensate.

But what if you want the clubs immediately? Do you have to go with "off the shelf" clubs? Actually, many manufacturers who provide custom golf clubs promise delivery within just a few days, a week or two at most.

Among the few negatives of custom golf clubs is the potential for offering them up as a surprise gift and the potential for resale. But at the same time, the golfer who is going to receive the custom clubs will likely gladly give up the "surprise" and most who go to this expense and trouble aren't going to offer the clubs for sale.

Only you can decide whether custom golf clubs are a good investment for you. If you're going to spend a bundle of money for an awesome set of clubs, you may very well take the extra step to get custom clubs.

### **Golf Courses – Same Course, New Game Every Time**

One thing every golfer will agree on is no golf course is ever the same. While playing different courses is fun and challenging, playing ones home course, no matter how many times it is done, is always going to be different.

Yes, it is the same course, nothing has been changed, except for the position of the cup on the green, but no golf course is ever exactly the same two days in a row, or, for that matter, the same day.

Will Smith in the movie "The Legend of Bagger Vance" told his protégé how the grass follows the sun, which means a putt that broke one way in the morning will break in the opposite direction in the afternoon.

Another thing that makes the same course different every day is the weather conditions. Weather plays a big factor in golf, and how a course plays. A wet course will play slower and the ball will not travel as far after hitting the ground. On a dry course, the ball will roll farther after hitting the turf.

A course will also play differently in hot or cold weather. Colder weather keeps the ball from traveling as far, while a well hit ball will go further on a warm or hot day. Additionally, if an area has been dry for any length of time, the fairways, unless they are watered heavily every day, will become as hard as concrete and provide extra distance once the ball hits the ground.

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Then comes the golfer's attitude. Yes, the frame of mind a golfer is in will have a direct affect on how well he or she plays and reacts to the course. Golf is a game requiring a calm, focused mind, so the player can concentrate on what he or she is trying to do on any particular shot.

One other thing that will make the same course play differently is how the grounds are kept. If the fairway is allowed to grow a little long, balls will not be able to roll as far, whereas, if they are kept trimmed close to the ground, the ball will roll further.

The rough is a whole other problem, as are other obstacles on the course, such as sprinkler heads. The rough is always going to be thick and hard to play out of, but a heavy, wet rough makes it almost impossible for a golfer to do much more than simply attempt to chip back onto the fairway. Sprinkler heads, which are positioned all over the course, will have an adverse affect on a ball that happens to hit them.

Believe it or not, who a person is playing with, or if he or she is playing alone when he or she normally plays with someone else will affect the way the course is played. So, this only goes to show how the same course, no matter how many times a person plays it, is never the same course twice.

### **Golf Gadgets, From the Great to the Ridiculous**

There are tons of golf gadgets out there, mainly because of the incredible increase in popularity of the sport. The more people who are ready to play the game, the more they're all looking for ways to improve their game. The result is that an industry that was doing fairly well before has boomed. There are entire companies built around a single golf gadget, and the results range from incredible golf aids to the ridiculous contraptions. Take a look at some of your options.

If you're having trouble finding time to hit the driving range and your backyard is too limited for driving practice, you have some options. You can play virtual golf, but this lacks the satisfying feel of the club striking the ball. You might find that a limited flight ball is the answer you've been looking for. These are just what the name implies. You have a ball that you place on the tee, then hit just like any other ball. But the ball won't travel outside a particular area. Or you can work with a regular ball and a net. The catch here is that you have to hit the net – every time.

Of course, putting pads and practice aids for your putting game have been around for ages. Give yourself the advantage of practice time in your office or living room. Choose from kits that are as simple as a pad with a cup, or those that offer features such as ball return.

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If you're into technology, you might find good use for a digital scorekeeper. Not only do you have an immediate way of tracking your score on the course, you have a digital record that you can save. Instantly recall scores from past games to help improve your current game.

Every dedicated golfer has probably been at the receiving end of some silly golf gifts. Think covers for your golf clubs - from handmade crochet covers to cutesy cartoon characters and everything in between. There are probably few ideas for golf club covers that haven't been tried on the market and these seem to be universal golf gifts. Covers do serve a purpose and many golfers are even secure enough to walk the course with tigers and mouse heads proudly protruding from the golf bag.

Are you having trouble lining up the exact spot you should be aiming for on the golf ball? You can find a stencil to help. Simply use the stencil to mark the ball, place it on the tee as directed, and you've got a clear target.

How about a metronome? No, you're not going to be taking your guitar onto the golf course, but a golf metronome can help you work on the rhythm of your swing.

There's no doubt that the golfers have tons of gadgets to choose from. Many offer real help to the golfer, while others are simply ways to collect money for a useless product. Some of these gadgets and gizmos will be completely wasted on one golfer but will be just what another needs to improve their golf game.

### **Golf Movies, What Will They Think of Next?**

There are several movies set around golf in some form, and golfers may be tempted to critique the players and the golf games played in those movies. If you're a die-hard golfer and always anxious to watch the next golf movie, be aware of your motives. If you're looking for instruction, you'll probably be disappointed. The golfers of movies never make a bad swing unless they were supposed to – it's the magic of Hollywood. But golf movies do have the ability to motivate us as golfers, or even as would-be golfers.

Hollywood will make a movie about anything – literally, and the sport of golf is no exception. And, with Hollywood making golf movies, comes the fact some of them are good, while others are not worth watching. This, though, will be up to the individual who makes the choice of which movie to see.

We will start with a golf movie starring Kevin Costner and examine it, following it with the Matt Damon, Will Smith entry and end up with Adam Sandler. Know this, while these are three golf movies, they are not the only ones out there or available.

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Beginning with “Tin Cup”, we find a golfing legend, but are never really told how Roy McAvoy achieved legendary status. We are informed he is a world class ball striker who has a knack for never finishing anything.

The fun begins when he meets Rene Russo, a local psychologist. Through a series of trial and error, “Cup”, as the character is most often called, finds himself qualified for the U.S. Open. Theoretically, this is possible, but highly unlikely as making the cut for the Open is extremely difficult for tour players, much less driving range pros.

Overall, it’s not a bad movie. It’s nearly impossible to foresee the fiasco Costner will face once he’s at the Open, or even the encouragement he gets from Russo.

Next comes “The Legend of Bagger Vance” where Will Smith helps Matt Damon find himself and what’s important to him through golf. The movie begins with the father of Charlize Theron killing himself after building the course, only to have the Depression hit. Theron extorts Bobby Jones and Walter Hagen to play in a match tourney. The town leaders insist on a local golfer playing as well, with Damon’s character getting rooked into it.

There are no losers in the movie as all three tie at the end of play. However, Damon and Theron, who were married before he went to WWI, get back together. It is presumed they remarry and live happily ever after. Throughout the movie, though, Smith (Bagger Vance) provides spiritual guidance for Damon, and the narrator, Hardy Greaves.

Next up is Sandler’s “Happy Gilmore” a most improbable golf movie as Sandler, a failed hockey player, takes up golf on a lark and finds he’s a natural. However, any golfer attempting to make the shots “Gilmore” makes will not only look ridiculous, but could injure himself in the process. Gilmore’s “driving” style - hopping toward the ball - simply will not work on the golf course as the slightest misstep will see the ball careen who knows where, if the player connects with the ball at all.

Of course, “Happy Gilmore” is not supposed to be a serious golf movie. Sandler is a comedian and the movie shows this quite well. But, for a more serious golf movie, there is a recent one out about Bobby Jones, and what he went through.

## **Golf Swing Analysis Software for Perfecting Your Game**

When it comes to perfecting your golf game the style and technique of your swing may be the single most important aspect on which to focus. There are many instructional videos and software available to the general public that aid in perfecting a golf swing. Whether you are an amateur or a professional you can benefit from having your golf swing technique and style analyzed.

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After all one main key to a successful golf game is your swing. The key to perfecting your swing is by analyzing your technique and style. Golf swing analysis can be achieved with the newest software available or with software that has been around and been proven time and again to create a better swing in all shapes and sizes of golfers.

Whether you are a serious die-hard golfer or a recreational weekend-warrior-type golfer there is golf swing analysis software that will help you discover where your swing might be going wrong. More importantly you will learn how to improve your swing so that your fullest potential will be met on the golf course.

With the newest technology available to you in software format there is no reason you should not be playing golf like the professionals. With a little patience and some hard work you will cause envy in your golf buddies with amazing stroke power and gentle control where needed. Easing your way from one hole to the next with grace and dignity that only comes from a solid golf swing.

Some software available will have instructions from your favorite golf professionals. Other software will use everyday golfers who are as eager as you to perfect their golf swing creating a notable difference in anyone's golf game in a matter of weeks. No matter which golf swing analysis software you choose to learn from the results will amaze even the most critical golf mate.

If you are looking for proven ways to improve your golf swing then look no further. Golf swing analysis software has brought golf lessons to your personal computer screen. With the help of your camcorder you will have an expert analysis of the critical key points that are involved in a single swing.

Software that improves golf swings with analysis information is user friendly in most cases and can even be found available as downloads. Free trials are frequently advertised, making the search for the perfect swing improvement tools easier to find.

Some of the incredible tools for imaging swings and readying those images for analysis are slow motion cameras and virtual comparison software. Seemingly endless technology-based analysis techniques are available to the general public. There is golf swing help for any caliber of golf participant and there is also software available for any budget.

Golf has gained in popularity in the last decade. This interest has grown due to the phenomenal participants in the public eye. Whether you have recently become a true fan of the sport or have always been a die-hard golf fanatic if you are ready to improve your golf swing, the latest technology software is the way to go.

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## **Golf, a Zen Experience?**

Good golfers center themselves before each and every shot. While it may look effortless, there is a great deal going on. Remember the scene in “The Legend of Bagger Vance” where Bobby Jones steps up to the ball preparing to tee off. Will Smith tells Matt Damon to watch Jones’s eyes, and how he sees the field. The eyes go soft as Jones takes his practice swings, getting his mind and body in tune with one another. His drive is as nearly perfect as a drive can be.

It may seem a bit farfetched, and some will object to the statement, for many will recognize the truth of this statement - Golf is a Zen experience. This is especially for the better golfers, no matter how they may joke around and seem to be goofing off.

This is what Zen is – being completely and totally in each and every moment at all times. Some people call it living life to its fullest, but that is something entirely different. Zen is more like experiencing every moment of life to its fullest and appreciating the moments for what they are.

Golf and Zen coincide on all aspects of the game. By being in the moment a golfer takes notice of everything around himself or herself. He or she notes the feel of the breeze as it is blowing across the course, recognizing its force and direction, but not actively thinking about it. He or she also notices the feel of the grass as they walk down the fairway, but he or she is not thinking about the next shot, not yet. Thinking about the shot will occur when the player gets to the ball.

At this time the player will note the distance from where he or she is to the green, the weather conditions and select a club. Avoiding distractions, the player will focus on how to make the next shot, again, though, without really thinking about it. Too much thought fouls up the mental processes causing the player to get tense and screw up the shot. Instead, the Zen golfer will trust his or her body, knowing the body and mind are in tune with one another and make the shot. For the record, no every shot will not be perfect going exactly where and how far the golfer intended. But, the major difference is the golfer familiar with, and practicing Zen, will not be adversely affected by a miss hit shot, whereas a golfer who stresses over every shot will.

The non-Zen golfer will get down on himself or herself, thinking how he or she is a lousy golfer and shouldn’t be on the course at all. The negative thoughts will be invasive throughout this player’s entire body as the body and mind are at odds with one another instead of being in a state of harmony. So, the end result is one bad shot is followed by another, and a good shot is looked upon as an accident, luck or a fluke.

## **Golf Cart Repairs and Accessories**

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Expert in-house golf car repairs can be found in only a few minutes with online directories. Any make or model of golf cars will have accessories and repair facilities available. Whether your golf car runs on electricity or with gasoline you will be able to easily gather information on how to repair it or where to have it repaired through online venues.

If shopping or searching online is not how you like to begin, local libraries and telephone directories or simply word of mouth are wonderful alternatives where results will be sound and solid. Reputable retail and repair facilities are more common than fly-by-night facilities. Online shopping provides secure means of purchasing items with credit cards. There are also ways in which online bank transfers are easily handles in a secure atmosphere. Obviously the means in which you shop is a personal preference.

If the large motorized golf cars are not your bag, there are manual golf push carts and pull carts that ease the labor of moving your golf clubs both to and from the course and from one hole to the next. With prices ranging from sixty dollars to one thousand dollars there are variations of the manual golf carts that are certain to meet the need of any golfer interested in this form of golf club transportation.

Golf cars come in every shape and style. There are name brands that are well known and some that are obscure but each one is backed with guarantees and warranties. There are even Rolls Royce and Jeep golf cars available to the golfer who apparently has everything. More than a utilitarian purpose golf cars such as these are used on estates for fast travel from the main house to destinations that are more comfortably achieved in the comfort of a custom golf car.

Necessities and accessories for your golf cars can be found in various places. There are repair facilities that offer in store viewing of many items. There are also websites available with detailed information. Discount parts stores are not uncommon and the user friendly formatting within most websites leave nothing to the imagination. Deluxe golf car covers, seat warmers, canopies, and air conditioners are among a few of the items found. You can decide if this items fall in to the category of necessity or accessory.

From cooler bags to batteries and beyond all your accessory needs will be met efficiently and effectively by established reputable golf car and golf cart stores. With many websites offering searches by serial numbers it makes your search for that one specific hubcap or fuse even simpler that it ever was before. There are websites that offer searches by state and then is narrowed down further to cities. Each city then has listing information about each place of business that deals with the sale and repair of golf cars. Knowing what a golf car shop offers as far as repairs, years in business and charges in advance is always an intelligent way to shop.

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## **Golfing always beats working**

No matter how well or poorly a golfer plays, one thing each and every one will agree on is this – a bad day on the golf course is better than the best day at work.

Let us take a look at this attitude. We shall start with golf being something that is fun to do, no matter how frustrating the game may become at times. All golfers know while every shot may not be a thing of beauty, they are in a pristine setting and are not being bothered. Besides, they all know the next shot will look exactly like the ones the professional golfers make on television.

Then, there is work. Work is what all of us have to do to survive. We get up in the morning, many of us dreading what the day holds, get ready and head to our place of business, whether it is a factory or an office, regardless if the job is blue collar or white collar. Work is an ugly four-letter word.

Work is where problems are. The employees are expected to help solve these problems, or they will be out of a job. While unemployment would give a person more time to play golf, it would not give them a way to pay their bills, and let's face it, we all like to eat.

Work is also where the boss is, and a lot of people have, for lack of a better way to put it, lousy bosses. There are those bosses who are pleasant to work for, who help the employee and understand the needs of those who work for them. Some bosses even set up golf tournaments for their employees. But, there are the other kind. Those bosses seldom have anything good to say to any of their employees, are always complaining that the company is not making enough money, no matter what the profit and loss sheet says, and make going to work a miserable experience for everyone around them.

This is where golf is much better than work. There are no bosses on the golf course. A person's social or employment ranking means nothing on a golf course. The only thing anyone cares about is how well he or she plays, and whether he or she has a good time while playing.

And what is not fun about playing golf. First, it is a great way to get outside and get some exercise, especially if the golfer walks the course. Next, golfing is a good way to socialize with others and meet new people. Golf is also a good way for a person to work out his or her frustrations. Whacking a golf ball not only feels good, but the better the ball is hit, the more praise the golfer gets, even if he or she is playing alone. After all, who hasn't hit a ball well, stopped, watched it in flight and thought, "Man that was a great shot."

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, a bad day on the golf course beats the best day a person can have at work.

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## **Golfing in the Wind**

Weather conditions play an important part in golf, and none more so than wind. While a wet golf course will prevent the ball from rolling as far after being hit, and can make it tough to get the ball in the air to begin with, the wind will have more bearing on the outcome of a round of golf than anything.

Why is this? Well, first the wind will affect the trajectory of the ball, taking it out of its intended course of flight, and dropping it somewhere the golfer did not intend for it to go.

Now, let us remember the majority of golfers, both men and women, are right handed or play right handed. The wind will be discussed from the right handed person's perspective. But, first, the golfer must be aware of which way the wind is blowing, even if he or she has no idea of how strong it is blowing. Of course, if a gale force wind is blowing on the golf course it really will not matter much how a golfer tries to hit the ball, unless the wind is behind his or her back. In such an event the golfer would want to get the ball higher and let the wind do most of the work, especially on a drive.

OK, so the golfer is in the tee box, the wind is brisk, blowing from right to left. He or she is looking at a par 3 hole about one hundred and fifty yards from the tee box to the hole. The flag is in the middle of the green. What can be expected? If the golfer attempts to hit the ball directly at the flag, he or she will be disappointed to see the ball being blown off to the left of the hole. Depending on the slope of the green, this can result in the ball rolling completely off the green, requiring a chip shot to try and save par. The smart golfer would take the wind into account and plan his or her shot accordingly.

Suppose the golfer is teeing off on a three hundred and eighty seven yard par 4 hole with a stiff wind blowing directly in their face. The smart thing to do would be for the golfer to alter his or her stance to keep the ball down low and out of the wind. By doing this, the golfer can get a decent drive. The golfer must also take the wind into account on the approach shot, again setting up in his or her stance to keep the ball low. And, it would also be a good idea for the golfer to pick a club one bigger than he or she normally would. So, if the golfer would use a seven iron to cover the last one hundred and fifty yards, with a stiff wind in his or her face, he or she should consider using a five or six iron.

## **Hitting the Ball - How Hard Can It Be?**

A golf outsider watches the game. How hard can it be to hit a stationary ball?. After all, major league baseball players hit balls traveling high speeds all the time. With that in

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mind, the outsider decides to take up the game of golf with the notion that the game is so relaxing because it requires little effort.

Think again.

Most of those people give up on the game before they really understand the dynamics of hitting that little ball. It makes sense that an iron club could pelt a little ball hundreds of yards, yet when the new golfer takes his first swing there is often little movement at all... sometimes no movement (or worse, backward movement).

There is a lot more to hitting that little ball than meets the eye.

Human nature is to use the iron to cup it under the ball to hit the ball up into the air. But look at the club. It is angled back, not at all designed to cup beneath the ball. So, when a golfer tries to scoop up the ball, he or she is really trapping it between the angled face of the club and the ground. That's why often times, the ball doesn't move – or worse, moves backwards just a little bit.

Instead of striving to hit up, it's best to learn to hit downward. By hitting down, the angled club will do the work for you, not the upswing of your club. When you hit down, the angle will bump your golf ball forward. It's that simple.

But putting power behind that little punt takes some practice. You'll be tempted to swing big and hard. It takes as much practice to resist that temptation as it does to learn to hit the ball! Once you have trained yourself against swinging upward, you will see your hitting start to improve.

Now you'll begin to understand why there are various golf club options and choices you have to make when making a shot. You'll need to pick your club based on the angle of the club face once you determine how far you want the ball to go and how you need it to perform.

If you've been practicing but still don't feel like you've got the hang of it, ask for help. Your golf course should have an attendant on hand who could give you some pointers. Maybe you could take some private lessons. The course pro shop should have suggestions for area teachers. Or, try the good, old buddy method. Ask another golfer you've seen play how he or she does it and if they have any tips for hitting the ball. You may think you sound silly, but when other golfers start to regale you with their tales of learning to hit the ball, almost everyone has had to address that challenge up front.

With those tips in mind and maybe even a few lessons behind you, go back to practicing. Just as it takes a while to train your mind to think about hitting downward instead of upward, it takes a while to train your body to actually do it the way you have in mind. Don't give up and remember, the game is all about relaxing so don't stress too much over hitting the ball.

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## **Instructional Golf Videos – Where to Get Them and What to Look For**

Instructional golf videos provide illustrated golf lessons and techniques that will improve your game. These lessons are shown in real time, slow motion and repeated as needed to insure the viewer is learning. Instructional golf videos can be purchased several different ways. The valuable lessons are diverse and functional and you will see your overall golf game improve considerably.

Given time any one can improve skills at any sport. No matter if you play golf on a regular basis or are just a novice, there comes a time when what you know limits the outcome of your game. Instructional golf videos will enhance your skills both mentally and physically by providing up to date information on technique.

Whether it is your swing that needs improving or if the stamina of your game is lacking there will be helpful advice and instruction available to you. With every aspect of golf laid out in these instructional videos to be scrutinized you will certainly find the one aspect that needs improvement in your game.

Golf is not only a sport where by you are challenged by other participant, the course also challenges you and the most challenge sometimes comes from within. Improving your game each time you play can only make the experience of golf more pleasant, less frustrating and always challenging.

Golf is a game of high expectation and regards both external and internal elements as key components to the magic of each game. Instructional golf videos are found to fit any budget and also to accommodate any degree of effective golf player. So whether you are into golf for the periodic relaxing game or if you wish to some day become professional there is no reason you cannot learn from instructional videos.

With new technology and enhanced imaging available you will be able to watch golf swings as they are being analyzed. Within this in depth view of an ordinary golf swing you will be shown the do's and don'ts for a perfectly executed golf swing. Learning a solid stance that will create and channel more power to the golf ball is another part of the instructions. Lastly but certainly not least instruction helps you by realizing there are many elements that make variations impossible to avoid. These are key reasons to believe you have something to learn from instructional golf videos.

You can find affordable high quality instructional golf videos online and in stores. Some of your favorite golf websites will also have free trials available so that you can make a better decision on which video will work for you. These are some of the obvious places you be able to buy instructional golf videos, if you were to think out of the box you

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would also find the library has media available for you to borrow. Don't delay your search for enlightenment, begin your optimal relaxing game of golf, and challenge that which becomes the fun of golf. With instructional videos you learn more about the game than you ever dreamed imaginable

## **Learn to Putt**

Many golfers spend an extraordinary amount of time learning to make an awesome drive. In truth, there's nothing prettier than the golf ball flying through the air and bouncing neatly onto the green – except the ball dropping neatly into the cup. While working on those longer shots is important, poor putting skill can literally lose the game.

Learning to put accurately every time can be a great expenditure of your time. Consistently getting to the green isn't going to do you a lot of good unless you're able to drop the ball once you're there. Take a few tips from the pros regarding the successful putt.

The “yips” are the bane of many golfers on the putt. This is simply a hesitation – rather like a hiccup – that causes you to get a less-than-smooth putt. A smooth stroke will always lend you better control over the ball.

When you're practicing your putt, pay attention to that accuracy. If you're having trouble controlling the line of travel, give yourself some help until you get a better feel for the game. You might find it helpful to make a mark on your club to clearly indicate the center of the putter. Marking the ball may also help you make a very solid swing. Chalk is a good way to make these marks, because it will easily wipe off after your practice session.

Try making yourself a mental picture of the pathway the ball should travel. If that mental picture doesn't help, try laying a piece of string along the ground between your ball and the cup. It may seem like a very simple thing, but watching the point that your ball veers can help you figure out what to do to correct the problem.

Too much spin on the putt can create some problems as well. Spin is one of the most difficult things to control, and the short distance at the putt is all about control.

If it's a long putt, resist the urge to put too much muscle into the swing. Avoid unnecessary loft. The higher your ball travels, the less control you have over it.

You also have to resist the urge to overshoot your target. Overshooting is a problem in many sports – not just golf. Imagine the number of times you've seen someone take a shot at a pool table only to have the ball ricochet off the back of the pocket and bounce back out. The same sometimes happens with baseball, football and basketball when the

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person throwing oversteps the amount of power needed to make a successful play. It's human nature to overthrow. Guard against that at the putt. There's little more frustrating than to walk past the cup to the new putting position which is even farther from the cup than the last – all because your swing was simply too powerful and the ball passed over the top of the cup.

When you're ready to putt, take a moment and take control before you take the swing. Remember that the control is every bit as important as your aim.

### **Leftie Golfers, Arise!**

Let's face it the majority of the world is designed for right-handed people, with the lefties, or southpaws, virtually ignored. If a right-handed person wants to take up the game of golf, getting equipment is no problem. They can go virtually anywhere to find clubs. The same can't be said for the left-handed person who wants to play from his or her natural side.

Of course, there are those lefties who can, and do, play from the right side. This is fine for those people who can accomplish this feat. But for the majority of southpaws, the only real option is to play from the left side. (Actually, this is a misnomer as the leftie will be on the right side of the ball, while the right-handers are on the left side. Left and right, in this instance, is being used in terms of a person's dominant side.)

Buying golf clubs for those who play left-handed can be a challenge. Unless he or she lives in a reasonably large city with a good, hopefully, national golf supply store, he or she will most likely wind up having to order his or her clubs, whereas the right-handed person can walk in off the streets, make his or her selection and leave.

Most golf stores, though, carry a selection of left-handed sets of clubs, with some left-handed putters (this is important as well, because it is as difficult to putt from the subordinate side as it is to hit from there. Basically, it does not feel natural to the player, and this will result in poor putting.)

However, should the southpaw want to upgrade individual clubs, say go from a metal shaft to a graphite shaft, he or she will most likely have to order the club. The right-hander, though, will simply be able to walk in, select the club he or she wants and leave, unless he or she is looking for custom clubs and has to get measured, in which case the club will have to be ordered.

Because the majority of people in the world - 90 percent at last count - are right-handed, it only makes sense that golfing equipment would be designed for them. After all, this is where the money is, and golf is an industry as well as a game. But there are companies

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who realize the lefties of the world want and deserve quality equipment, and quality golf equipment for the left-handed player is available.

When on the golf course, the lefty can expect to be razzed by his or her right-handed counterparts and be told he or she is playing on the wrong side of the ball. There will likely be other jokes made about the person's left-handedness as well.

But, golf is a game that makes no exceptions as to a person's dominant side. Courses are designed to be challenging, and challenging they are to both right-handers and left-handers.

Some would argue right-handed golfers are better players, but this has no bearing in fact. A good golfer is a good golfer regardless whether he or she plays from the right or left side. Statistics, however, will show right-handers to be better, simply because there are more of them and the statistics are weighted accordingly.

## **Online Golf Lessons**

There are many different ways to achieve golf lessons, and many ways to effectively acquire valuable lessons out there. Among the many ways to learn lessons of golf, online golf lessons are one of the fast effective ways to gain knowledge of strategies and techniques. Improving your golf game while realizing your best potential is one great reason to utilize online golf lessons.

Finding the best website for online golf lessons is relatively simple. Perhaps you have already established a comfortable, user-friendly golf website and that site lends you access to online golf lessons. If not, there are many reputable websites from which to choose. Also there are varied means in which to utilize the lessons offered.

Online golf lessons can include tips on how to improve specific aspects of your golf game. Normally on most websites, an overall generalization is provided so that you can see the broad scope of golf. This occurs at first and as you gain more direct knowledge toward where your particular golf game suffers you can find information that will seem personalized.

There will also be valuable information about stance, follow through of an effective swing and the finer points of swing analysis. Online golf lessons can even include time and effort geared toward the mental aspect of the game. As we know golf is a competitive sport in which you are competing against other golfer, the course and most importantly yourself.

In most case online golf lessons are offered on a non-paying basis and are simply included in your favorite golf website. In some cases you may find golf lessons that are

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presented in acrobat reader formatting and are downloaded into your personal computer at a minimal cost to you. Payment is made in a secure fashion with a credit card. Shopping around to search for the most effective lessons for your level of interest in the sport of golf is of utmost importance. Searching for the perfect lessons for you will serve to keep costs down and also to provide optimal help in areas where you most need it.

Most scenarios where golf lessons are available for free or for a cost in a downloadable format you will be given ample information. This information will be provided to determine if your personal computer has the capacity to download these various programs. And to assure you that your computer also possess the capabilities to present the lessons in the way they are meant to be viewed.

One benefit from utilizing online golf lessons to improve your golf skills is that you can experience the lessons at your leisure. You can study and practice at your leisure and then too have the lessons handy for reviewing when you forget exactly what was being taught. Once you have improved your golf game and see the results you were hoping to see it is possible you will search for a more specific online lesson for your needs. Knowing where to look and what to expect with effective results will make that search much more pleasant.

### **Pre-Owned Golf Equipment – A Real Option**

If you are on a budget but golf is your sport of choice then you have many options to purchase pre-owned golf equipment. From gently worn items to golf cars that no longer suit the needs of fellow golfers there are countless ways to own high quality low priced golf items. And even if you are not on a set income there are many opportunities to find quality golfing items that are in great condition.

Golf clubs are a very intimate part of every golf game. Purchasing used golf clubs can be tricky but not impossible. If you are patient and have an idea what type of golf clubs suit you best, resale shops are a penny-wise approach to acquiring high quality low cost golf clubs. In looking for left handed clubs or other unique features you might be surprised how easily your search for used clubs will succeed in sound results. Whether you are on a budget or just like to spend your money in a wise manner used golf clubs are the ticket.

Gently worn golf shoes are not an uncommon purchase. Whether found at a yard sale, thrift store or a pre-owned golf accessory store, name brand and low cost shoes are an easy find. Here again patience will be a helpful tool in your search. There is a saying

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among resale shop patrons, “If you are looking for something specific, odds are you won’t find it until you have bought it new.” An open mind is also a very wonderful thing when shopping resale venues.

Used golf balls can be found by the bag at yard sales or thrift stores. These balls are a smart purchase and serve a great need by allowing the golfer a way to practice his or her golf swing without concern to the loss. Bags of tees can be found for minimal cost also. Ball washers, golf towels, and cleat wrench kits are all likely finds in the resale atmosphere. Head covers and other accessories are common among yard sales and in resale shops.

Golf cars and carts can be purchased used. Manual push or pull carts can easily be a high cost item. Purchasing gently used golf carts is another way to stay geared up with quality equipment while money remains in your pocket. There are websites available that make finding replacement parts for motorized golf cars a breeze. Even purchasing a golf car that needs a small amount of maintenance or possibly a new mechanical part or accessory is not an unusually bad decision.

Purchasing pre-owned articles is a great way to save money and most times you will find decent well taken care of products. In some cases there are safe guards to take into account so that you are not spending hard earned money on an item that will only cause you grief, give you a headache and cost you more money in the long run. More than likely your pre-owned, resold, or gently used equipment; accessories and personal golfing items will bring you years of happy use.

### **Seven Iron – The Perfect Club**

Anyone who has seen the movie “Tin Cup”, starring Kevin Costner, will understand the importance of the seven iron – the perfect golf club.

A golfer can literally shoot par on just about any course using nothing more than a seven iron and a putter. Granted, driving with a seven iron will not get the golfer drives of three hundred yards, but, then again, this club was not designed to hit the ball that far. But, depending on how strong the golfer is, a good shot with a seven iron can be anywhere from one hundred and seventy five yards to two hundred and twenty five yards, and those are not distances to sneeze at.

Following the drive with the seven iron, the golfer would then make his or her approach shot. Depending on the length of the hole, the golfer will either want a full swing, or to cut their swing, thereby adjusting the distance the ball will travel. And, again depending on distance and weather conditions, the golfer may want to put the ball either in the front

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or back of their stance. This will give the ball more loft or keep it low, depending on which stance is taken.

As the golfer approaches the green, the seven iron can be used as a wedge to chip the ball onto the green. By closing the stance and hitting the ball in back of the stance, the golfer can flip the ball onto the green. Of course, the golfer will want to cut his or her swing or they will fly the green, which will result in a lost stroke, possibly a lost ball, and almost definitely them losing their temper.

Once the ball has been chipped onto the green, the seven iron's usefulness is pretty much over, unless the golfer has incredible courage and wants to use the seven iron as a putter. This, too, was done in "Tin Cup", but isn't advisable for the average golfer.

On short, par 3 holes, the seven iron is again the perfect club to use. Once again, the golfer can tee the ball up and hit out of the back or front of his or her stance. Depending on the length of the hole, the ball could be teed higher for more loft and less distance. Granted, it does feel awkward to have both feet in front of the golf ball, but it also prevents the golfer from getting too much of a swing and flying the green. It will, however, allow the ball to be hit higher and with more control.

And, a well hit seven iron is a thing of beauty to watch. The ball takes off in a majestic arc, following a predetermined flight plan (if properly struck), flies beautifully through the air and lands gently on the turf, bringing the golfer one step closer to his or her goal – the cup.

A seven iron is also handy to have around the house, as it is long enough to allow a person to reach behind a couch, from one end or the other, and drag something out that is in the middle.

### **Some Warm Up Tips**

When it's time to warm up, some golfers think they need to hit the driving range with everything they've got. In truth, warming up to make your game as effective as it can be means that you work on a variety of swings and become familiar with the conditions.

For example, you golf differently on a windy day than if the air is still. You probably play at least a bit different on days when the temperature is raging than when it's cool. Here are some tips from those who hit the courses on a regular basis.

Driving is a good way to start, but start slowly. Choose a short iron for your first few drives, giving your muscles a chance to loosen up and to get the feel for the day. Work up to longer drives, but remember that the goal isn't only to see how far the ball will go –

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control is more important than distance and this is your chance to gather your skills to exercise that control.

Don't just drive. Some people make the mistake of thinking they've completed an adequate warm up once they've managed to make a few successful drives. Take time for some chipping and putting as well. Make the most of your swing and any recent lessons you've had. Remember that a round of golf is much more than teeing off.

One of the most important warm up tips is to get your mood and emotions under control. Smacking your frustrations out on a golf ball probably isn't going to help your game at all – though it might arguably be good for your frustrations. Take time to gather your calm, focus on your game and let the day's troubles fall away. Your mood – especially if it's a bad mood – can greatly impact your game.

Another mistake many people make at the warm up session is to start practicing. This isn't the time to try out new clubs, new swings, or new information. This is a time to play your best game, just as you'll be doing shortly – at the first tee. It's okay to put in a few practice swings if you're working on something you want to put into play for this game, but don't get caught up in a practice session. One of the purposes of a warm up time is to build your confidence. You can't do that if you're continually making errors. Use the techniques you're most familiar with and be ready to congratulate yourself on all your successes during the warm up.

If you are doubtful about the need for a good warm up period, just think back to a recent game of golf that you didn't warm up for. How was your first tee? How was the fourth? Did you spend the rest of the game making up for some poor strokes early on? The warm up is a chance to make those mistakes before they're being engraved on a score card. Take time to make yourself confident and you'll play a confident game.

### **Stimp Meters – How Fast Is Your Course?**

If you are fairly new to golfing, you might not have even heard of a stimp meter yet. The average leisurely golfer might not ever need to know what a stimp meter is. But, since a stimp meter is important to the speed of a golf course, it doesn't hurt to know a little about it.

If you play golf for any length of time, you will hear serious golfers talk about how the course is "stimping." This refers to how fast the courses are running and that speed can actually be estimated with a stimp meter.

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A stimp meter is the device used to measure the speed of the greens. To get the stimp rating, a ball is rolled down a little ramp (the stimp meter) in eight different directions. The stimp rating is the average distance the ball rolls once it touches the greens. For instance, a course with a stimp rating of 12 is a course in which the ball rolled an average of 12 feet once it hit the greens. Most Professional Golfers Association courses run at a 10 to 12 stimp rating. The higher the number, the faster the course. Most municipal golf courses have an average stimp reading range from 7 to 10.

Why is it important to know a course's stimp rating? You probably won't ever care about it unless you play competitively (or play with other people who play competitively). A stimp rating might explain why you've had a "bad" day on the course. For instance, when you usually score well on a course with an average stimp rating, you might not score as well on a course with a higher rating and faster course.

Another consideration in measuring stimp rate is the turf on which you are playing golf. It was once true that the rate difference was obvious between natural grass and artificial turf. Today, however, manufacturers take their artificial grass seriously. Many brands have developed special "natural bend" features that mimic the way real grass moves. There should be no discernable difference in the stimp meter reading these days on courses with artificial greens.

For golfers who like to practice putting at home, you can buy outdoor synthetic turf putting greens for your backyard. If you'd like to practice based on the course you will soon be playing, you can adjust the stimp rating on your practice greens to match that of the course you will soon play. As with any purchase, research the companies that sell such products, learn all the pros and cons of the practice turf and ask all relevant questions before you buy a system.

If the course doesn't have to travel particularly fast for you and you are content to get the exercise and relaxation that a day of golfing provides, you'll probably never need to know the stimp rating of the courses you play. But, if someone comes up to you and asks how the greens are stimping, you'll know what they're talking about.

### **Take a Look at the Sand and Pitching Wedges**

There are several types of wedges in the world of golf. You'll likely find several wedges in your own golf bag. For our purposes today, the topic of wedges will be limited to the pitching wedge and the sand wedge.

First, wedges have shorter handles and other clubs in the bag. This is because the golfer has to get closer to the ball in order to get the elevation he or she needs to make the shot. Wedges, especially the pitching wedge, are for short shots, usually no further than one hundred yards.

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The primary use for a pitching wedge is to get the ball up in the air quickly. Distance is not as important as elevation, at least initially, but the golfer does want the shot he or she made with the pitching wedge to reach the green, preferably with the ball rolling close to the cup.

The sand wedge is primarily, though not exclusively, used to get golf balls out of sand traps, especially if the sand trap is close to the hole. Because of the angle of the club's head, the pitching wedge is for extremely short distances, say within fifty yards of the green. This club is designed to get the ball in the air in a hurry, but not to get the ball very far down the course. There are other clubs for that purpose.

The sand wedge, though, can be used to get a ball out of a tricky situation. Because of the angle of its loft, approximately seventy-five degrees if properly struck, a golfer can get the ball over trees and back onto the fairway. However, if the golfer in question blades the ball, all bets are off. Blading the ball is when a golfer does not get under the ball, but hits closer toward the middle of the ball. While the ball will get in the air, it will not go very high, and it will most definitely go further than the golfer intended. However, this is the same for all clubs, not just wedges. With the wedge, though, blading is more noticeable as the ball will fly the green, costing the golfer a shot.

The pitching wedge and the sand wedge can be used in the place of a chipping wedge, yet another in the family of wedges. Chipping is done when the approach shot is close to the green, but doesn't make it onto the green. Chipping can be done when the ball is as far out as one hundred yards, though this is a more difficult type of chip and the golfer may want to consider a different club altogether.

To use the sand wedge in the place of a pitching wedge, the ball should be fairly close to the green, say, within twenty five yards. This is because the shot should be softer, more for loft than distance, and with the angle of the sand wedge's club head, it is easy to get under the ball too much and get virtually no distance on the shot.

To use the pitching wedge to chip with is easier, as the club head on the pitching wedge is not as angled. Foot placement is important here, as the golfer must decide if he or she wants more loft than distance.

## **The 10 Commandments of Golf Etiquette**

Even if you are not a golf pro, being on your best behavior on the course will make you shine like a true sports star. As with any sport, there are a few rules of etiquette golfers should follow.

Rule Number One:

Be on time. Most courses require tee time appointments. Make sure to arrive at the course

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about 30 minutes before your tee off. This will give you time to park, get your clubs, take care of cart rental and warm up.

**Rule Number Two:**

Obey the dress code. If you don't know the dress code, make a phone call and ask. Some courses prohibit jeans. Some forbid shorts. Some require golf shoes without spikes. If you carry a cell phone, ask if they are allowed before you hit the course. While it is easy enough to change your ringer to silent or vibrate, answering your cell phone still requires you to talk – in some cases loudly. Leave it behind if you can.

**Rule Number Three:**

Set an order of play before you begin. Use the old coin toss method or simply decide, but have a plan.

**Rule Number Four:**

Be quiet and still when a golfer in your group in a group that is very close by is preparing to hit, especially when they are putting. Don't cloud the golfer's line of vision.

**Rule Number Five:**

Watch where you hit! Don't swing if you run the risk of hitting a fellow golfer with an erratic ball. Likewise, don't hit until you know your ball won't drop down into the group playing in front of you. While you may think it's common sense that players won't stand directly behind you when you're preparing to swing, check – just to be sure.

**Rule Number Six:**

Be protective. Protect the greens by replacing your divots and repairing all ball marks. Don't disturb sand traps any more than necessary and remember to rake them smooth before you leave. Here's another tip: exit a sand trap on the shallow side to avoid creating more damage to the trap.

**Rule Number Seven:**

Follow cart rules. If you are driving a cart, know the rules for the course. Carts may be prohibited on wet, rainy days. Some courses require carts to stay on designated paths. Always keep your cart a good distance from greens and tees and never park in another golfer's way.

**Rule Number Eight:**

No matter what movies or television shows portray, business deals are rarely cinched on the golf course. It's not easy to talk business on the course because the game requires concentration. Don't break a golfer's concentration on the game by trying to secure a business deal.

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In another matter, it is recommended that any betting on the game of golf be kept nominal, or as a “friendly” bet. Anything larger creates stress and animosity – which is far against the goal of the game.

Rule Number Nine:

Here’s a tip: Tip. If you are using a caddy or assistant offered by the course, remember to tip. Ask a “regular” at the course what the norm is and tip that amount.

Rule Number Ten:

Have fun and enjoy the sport!

### **The 7-Wood - The Best Field Wood**

Of all the clubs in your golf bag, you may have overlooked the potential for the seven-wood. There are those who believe the seven-wood is the best field wood in a golfer’s bag.

There are golfers who may not agree with this statement, but that’s a matter of opinion. The seven-wood is as close to a perfect field wood as a golfer can have in his or her bag. This is because the seven-wood swings as easily as a six-iron, but gives the golfer more distance and accuracy.

Depending on the physical strength of a golfer, the seven-wood is a great club from about two hundred and twenty five yards in. First off, it is easy to get under the ball and get the necessary elevation to move the ball toward the green, which is where all golfers want to be in as few strokes as possible. Now, should a golfer have a seven-wood with a graphite shaft the golfer will have a better feel of the ball as compared to a metal shaft. The graphite makes the club more flexible and gives the ball a little extra lift upon impact.

Another great thing about the seven-wood is it is a near perfect club on a long par 3 or a short par 4 hole. Let’s say a golfer is looking at a one hundred and eighty yard par 3. Sure, he or she could grab a three or four iron out of the bag and make the drive, and make a good drive. But, by taking the seven-wood out of the bag, the golfer has given him or herself a little something extra. He or she can tee the ball a little higher than he or she could by using an iron. This will help him or her get the ball up in the air faster and headed toward the green, especially if the drive is made with the ball slightly toward the back of the golfer’s stance. This also reduces the power of the swing, so the drive won’t fly the green, which is hitting the ball over the back of the green.

And, by making a slight alteration in his or her stance when the field, the seven-wood can help get around or over an obstacle. Say the golfer is about one hundred and sixty five yards out and has a tree about ten yards away, directly in front of him or her. By opening the stance a little and changing the position of the hips, the golfer can slice or hook the

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ball around the tree, but not have such an arc as to take the ball out of play. This type of shot still allows the golfer to get all the power he or she ordinarily would with his or her seven-wood, along with the elevation he or she expects, But without the negative consequences.

This particular shot, though, should be practiced on the driving range with the seven-wood long before the golfer attempts to make it on the course.

## **The Golf Traps**

It's a nightmare – You're golfing along with a perfect swing, perfect stance and you've even managed to eliminate that slice that's plagued you. Despite doing everything right, even the best golfer will find himself (or herself) occasionally mired in the sand, knee-deep in grass or standing behind the largest tree on the golf course. If golf courses were all perfectly smooth with no bunkers, sand or water, the game would likely become boring for even the most dedicated golfer. Obstacles make golf a better game, and you'll be even more appreciative of these traps if you know the best ways to get out of the situations.

What are the odds that your golf ball will roll to a stop directly behind a tree? You have a couple of options. You can bore a hole through the tree large enough for your ball to pass through, but that's probably not going to meet the approval of either your fellow golfers or the course maintenance crew.

The option many golfers take is to sacrifice one putt to put the golf ball in a better position. Whether this is your best option depends on your ability as a golfer, and how much you're willing to risk on this one play. If there's another tree handy, a ricochet shot is sometimes an option, but it's too uncontrollable. You can't tell how the ball will react against the rough bark of the tree.

A better choice is to work on a curve ball before you get to this point, so that you'll be confident trying it when the time comes.

Sand presents another problem altogether. Many golfers choose the "whack and see" method. Just pull a sand wedge from the golf bag, whack the general area of the ball, then watch the sand flying through the air to see if a golf ball happened to take flight as well.

Consistency is the key to golfing overall, and getting out of the sand trap is no exception. Sand is a real problem when trying to control a golf ball. Golf balls don't roll well in sand and you're going to have trouble controlling a putt from the sand trap. Add to that the fact that you're often going to be dealing with an upward face of the trap before you're back

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on open course, and the only consistently reliable way to get out of a sand trap is to use the wedge and get enough loft on the ball to clear the face of the trap.

Choose your wedge carefully. Remember that you're looking for enough loft to clear the sand, but less loft is usually easier to control.

Regardless of the obstacle you're facing, controlling the ball, choosing the best club and setting up your shot are the steps that will get you back onto open ground.

## **The Ideal Golfing Trip**

What is the ideal golfing trip? Frankly, it will be different for everybody, and not necessarily the same for an individual.

For some golfers the ideal outing would be going to a major course and getting to play on it, knowing professional golfers had played over this same course. What golfer would not want to play the course where the Master's or U.S. Open is held? Most would almost kill (figuratively speaking) for the chance. These are courses where legends have played - players such as Arnold Palmer and Tiger Woods. (Yes, Woods can be considered a legend of golf based simply on the fact he has won so many tournaments at such a young age.)

For others, though, the ideal golfing is not so much where they play as to the weather conditions. Some golfers prefer a day with mild temperatures and a light breeze to help keep them cool, while others want a challenge and will go to the extremes weather-wise. There are those who will play when the temperature hits triple digits, or drops well below freezing, just to see how well they play under these circumstances.

And, there are golfers who will play in the snow and at night. Specially designed golf balls have been created for these golfers. The night players can chase their glow-in-the-dark golf balls all over the course, but need to take a flashlight to prevent running into a tree or some other hazard on the course. For those who play in the snow, fluorescent golf balls were created. These brightly colored balls are easy to see against the snow-covered course.

Either way, golfing in the extreme is a challenge, and not one for the faint of heart, or the poor of play. For golfers who play in extreme heat, they need to remember to bring plenty of water to drink and leave all alcoholic beverages alone. Those who play in the cold should have something warm to drink in a thermos to help keep their body temperature up, even if they are walking the course. But, these people tender to consider this to be ideal golf outings.

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For most golfers, though, the ideal golf outing is simply the chance to go to their favorite course with a few friends and chase golf balls all over the pasture, just having a good time and not taking the game too seriously. This is the most prevalent type of golfer, and these players can usually be found playing in couples and foursomes. They will chide one another on a bad shot, while complimenting one another on good shots and putts. The final score rarely matters (unless they tend to be serious golfers), as they are on the links to have a good time and get away from the stresses of every day life.

Oddly enough, there are golfers who prefer to play the game by themselves. The solo golfer will most likely walk the course, getting to know the feel of every tee box, fairway and green with his or her feet.

### **The Must Have Five Iron**

Aside from the seven-iron, the club every golfer absolutely must have, without question, is the five-iron. This is because the five-iron can be used easily, well and in a wide variety of situations.

Though not as versatile as the seven-iron, the five-iron is still a very versatile club. The angle of the club head allows the golfer to get plenty of elevation on his or her shot, while not being angled so steeply as to prevent the golfer getting a great deal of distance on his or her shot as well.

The five-iron is a great club from about two hundred yards and in. For most golfers the maximum range with their five-iron is about one hundred and eighty yards, no small distance on the links, and that is for sure. Yet, this club, this wonderful club is absolutely perfect for the distance. It allows the golfer to address the ball confidently, knowing if he or she strikes the ball properly it will hurl majestically through the heavens toward the promised land of the green.

The five-iron is also of particular use in getting out of the rough and back into the fairway, depending on how deep the rough is. If the rough is four to six inches deep, the best thing a golfer can do is grab a wedge and chip the ball back into the fairway. Sure, it will cost a stroke, but one lost stroke is better than several, and this could happen if a golfer attempted to power the ball out of the rough with their five-iron.

The five-iron is an easy club to control. Its length is just about perfect and the feel of the club is a wonder in itself. The five-iron is a marvel to swing. Why is this? This is a good question, and here is the answer. The five-iron is a mid to long range club for use two hundred yards and in, depending on how strong the golfer is and how well the golfer uses the club. Getting the reverse "C" of Arnold Palmer is a breeze with the five-iron and a golfer can generate a considerable amount of speed with the club head. The speed of the club head determines how far the ball will be hit, much like bat speed in baseball.

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Because of the club's length, it is easy to control, unless a golfer is playing without gloves and has sweaty hands. Sweat will allow the club to turn in a golfer's hands, resulting in something bad happening. Usually the something bad is the club head turning as it meets the golf ball, with the ball careening almost one hundred and eighty degrees from the golfer. This is why golfers wear gloves.

A well hit five-iron shot will, in all likelihood, go where the golfer expects it to go, and can look like a shot seen on a televised golf tournament. It will also cover a great deal of territory in a short time, getting the golfer closer to his or her desired location, the green.

### **The Nine-Iron – What's That Club For?**

The vast majority of golfers have a nine-iron in their bag. But many may wonder what, exactly, is this club supposed to be used for?

After all, the nine-iron can't be used if the ball is more than one hundred and thirty yards from the green. Any further back and the golfer would choose either a seven or eight-iron. And, while the nine-iron has a highly angled head, for a regular iron, it does not get the loft a golfer gets from a pitching, lofting, chipping or sand wedge, though the nine-iron does offer more distance than clubs in the wedge family.

Is the nine-iron good for anything at all? Does a golfer really need a nine-iron in the bag? The answer to both questions is yes. This is because the nine-iron is a good short-range utility club and does provide good elevation from the fairway to the green. The nine-iron can be used to chip with as well, and works well as a sand wedge should a golfer wind up in the bunker and not have a sand wedge handy.

Then again, should a golfer find him or herself one hundred and forty yards from the hole, the nine-iron can be used in place of the seven or eight iron. However, the golfer may want to think about intentionally blading the ball for the extra distance, though he or she would have to sacrifice elevation. There are times when such a shot is necessary on the course, as a seven or eight iron would be too much club for the distance in question. This will depend on the course being played and the obstacles the golfer is facing on a particular hole.

For chipping one hundred yards out or closer, the nine-iron is a good choice in clubs. By placing the ball in back of his or her stance, a golfer can get more elevation on the ball, while cutting the distance. If the golfer keeps his or her feet close together, he or she will not be able to hit the ball as hard and, therefore, will not fly the green. (Flying the green is a term used when the golfer hits a ball that carries over the green.)

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In addition, the nine-iron is a good choice in clubs if the golfer is playing a short par 3 hole. Some courses have par 3 holes as short as one hundred yards, so anything more than a nine-iron will be too much club. Again, though, stance is important as the golfer does not want to drive the ball over the green. A closed stance, in this instance will help the golfer cut the distance the ball travels, while putting the ball back in his or her stance will help the ball get in the air faster. Properly struck, the ball should fly in a perfect parabolic curve, landing gently on the green with the ball, hopefully, rolling close to, if not into the cup.

So, to answer the question, a nine-iron is a good club to have around.

### **The One Iron - A Useless Club if Ever There Was One**

Professional golfer Lee Trevino once said not even God could hit a one-iron. This was just before Trevino was struck by lightning. He survived. And, he may be right, God might not be able to hit a one iron, though He certainly proved He could hit Lee Trevino.

A one iron is, for the most part, a useless club. It is the longest of the irons and the hardest to hit, or be consistent with. For the average golfer, or even the majority of professional golfers, a one iron simply isn't needed and just takes up room in the all important golf bag.

In most instances where a golfer might choose to hit a one iron, a better choice would be to use a wood instead. For example, say a golfer's drive went two hundred and fifty yards on a par 4 hole, leaving him or her another two hundred and fifty yards away. Yes, a one iron could conceivably be used to hit a ball that far, but because it is so difficult to hit and control, the golfer would be better off grabbing his or her three wood out of the bag. The three wood is a good field wood and, depending on the golfer's strength, can easily be used to get the ball on the green in regulation play. The wood is easier to hit and control than the one iron, and would be the more logical club selection in this instance.

This is not to say a one iron is good for nothing. In fact, the one iron is an excellent club to use to try and retrieve a ball lost out of bounds in high weeds. The one iron can be used to beat a snake should one slither onto the course. Now, a snake on the course would likely have a negative effect on the golfer, and a smart golfer would simply let the snake continue slithering on its way.

But, golf is a frustrating game, and sometimes a golfer just has to hit something. In this case, a snake would do, especially if the golfer is having a bad round and nothing is going right. However, the golfer should remember, when having a bad round, it may not be the best idea to take out his or her frustration on a snake. One miss could result in getting bit.

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Or, if a golfer sprained a knee or ankle, which is highly possible, then the one iron could be used as a cane, allowing the golfer to limp back to the clubhouse or the 19<sup>th</sup> hole for a little refreshment.

Then again, those times when nothing is going right and a golfer just has to wrap a club around a tree to work out his or her frustration – the one iron is the perfect choice. After all, it is a club that is hard to hit and primarily takes up space in the golf bag. So why not wrap it around a tree.

### **The Online Golf Tip – A Reliable Source?**

When searching for ways to improve your golf game online tips can be an amazing tool. From professionals to novices everyone has a reason why your golf game can be improved. And you can always have reason to improve.

With golf tips online you will experience firsthand the diversity that comes from advice given in cyberspace. You will discover on message boards and in blogs that people from every walk of life are willing to share advice and tips for golf games played all over the globe.

There are also very specific golf tip websites that are certain to enlighten even the most seasoned golf participant. Just when you thought there was nothing more to learn in the game of golf, you can log on, link up, and teach any old dog many new tips.

Many of the websites that are put into place strictly to enlighten golf fans with news and interesting facts or stories about the sport will also have links to online golf tip sites. And there are other websites that exclusively offer golf tip videos and software. Then too you will likely find a few websites that offer free trial offers in various popular and user friendly formatting.

Time proven tips by masters of the sport will have lent you their important tips on how to survive the game of golf well under par. When you are standing on the green, waiting for your turn at the challenging ninth hole of your favorite golf course these helpful online tips will come flooding back to you and will make a huge difference in how you see the game, how you play the game and how you execute each precise effective swing.

From golf course etiquette to the finer points and semantics that rule your mental game to the demanding physical side of golf you will gain essential tips from professionals as well as from laymen. With golf growing in popularity and more and more courses opening to the public there is no real reason everyone should not attempt to play just once.

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Tips can be found online about the greatest golf courses for beginners or professionals. You can also discover through online golfing tips the cost of greens fees, the best times of the year to play certain courses and also whether or not you have the choice of nine or eighteen holes. These tips can save you time and money in many ways.

Golf equipment can be a costly matter, especially to someone who is not very certain golf is his or her sport of choice. Online golf tips can clue you into the best resale shops and what gold equipment not to buy used. Online tips provide specific knowledge about courses and techniques. These tips can also provide helpful ideas on how to save money on top name brand equipment, and also keep you up to date with all the latest trends. Armed with the most easily accessible information you can handle, don't be surprised when your golf game improves immensely.

### **The Perfect Grip – Or is It?**

It's easy to say that those who don't have a good grip won't have a good game. And it's easy to say that a good grip is vital to a good swing. But what constitutes a "good grip?" How do you achieve it? And if you don't have one, where do you get it?

Unlike the latest gadget, the training aid that helped you stop that awful slice or even your lucky golf sweater, you can't find a perfect golf grip at your favorite golf supply place. And even more confusing, if you ask any fifty golfers – amateurs or professionals - to demonstrate The Perfect Grip, you'd likely get fifty slightly different demonstrations.

It comes to a variety of factors. Unfortunately for some (and fortunately for others), golf isn't an exact science. You can't put an equation on your golf grip. But there are some things you can do to make your grip better. Take a look at some of the tips offered by the pros.

Make sure the grip on your club is right for you. Most people understand the role clubs play in a great round of golf. If you're not playing with your own clubs, you may find yourself playing a poor game of golf. But some people think that a new set of golf clubs are a wonderful gift without stopping to consider that the clubs may not fit the player. Just as a single pair of gloves wouldn't fit every golfer, golf grips are made for the individual. Take time to find what fits you best and don't settle for something else.

Comfort is another point. No matter which golf grip you prefer, you have to be comfortable with it. If you're spending all your time chanting a mantra – "right hand like so, left thumb goes here, push the left hand to here" – you can't think about anything else. While most golfers do have to spend some time practicing the grip, it shouldn't become the most time-consuming point of learning (or playing) the game.

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If you aren't happy, try something new. If your grip is too uncomfortable or the grip on your clubs too large, fix it. Unless you're working with a professional coach who refuses to let you make any adjustments, take a look at your methods and your equipment.

If you do have someone pointing out a better method (and if your game is indicating that you need that help), take time to give it a good try. Any change in your grip is probably going to result in at least some minor discomfort. Your body, arms and hands are accustomed to working in one particular movement and a change in your grip is going to mean that all those parts have to make some adjustments. That change probably isn't going to happen naturally in just a few minutes (or hours) of practice. Give the new grip a chance to become more natural and see if it helps. It's never too late to revert, but you should at least give it a proper chance.

### **The Potential Challenges of Putt Putt Golf**

Most people don't consider miniature golf to be challenging. On the other hand there are avid putt-putt golf participants that travel the United States in search of the next great challenge. Almost every town has at least one such golf course. There are websites that deal strictly with miniature golf vacations.

What better way to form a sense of bond with your family than to pack them up and head off to the nearest putt-putt golf course? Or set your entire family vacation around the idea of a miniature golf course. Just like with every other family there is a theme to your family vacations. Now if dad can just admit his inner most desire to see the largest miniature golf course in America, we can be happily on our way.

Whether you are heading across the state to see the most amazing small golf course or across town to the local putt-putt course you are bound to find fun. From the largest to the smallest family member there will be challenges for each one. And normally there are video arcades or large ponds with giant goldfish to feed when you are finished. Don't forget the ice cream parlor on the way home.

Golf is golf, they say, and no matter how you get to play it be glad you're playing. The challenges on a legitimate golf course can't be too much more challenging than those dreaded windmills on a miniature golf course. Sand traps? Don't make us laugh. With putt-putt golf there are dark caves, stampeding elephants and once there was a report of a giant whale that ate golf balls.

In reality the thought and preparation that is behind each and every miniature golf hole rivals that of any regular-sized golf experience. Putt-putt golf courses are expensive to keep going. Electricity bills are to be paid. Upkeep and maintenance is also an important part of any golf course, miniature golf is no exception. And though they seem to suffer as

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part of America's fading pastime where families gather and do things out-of-doors as a group, put-putt golf will not go quietly. With your interest, curiosity and support future generations will be blessed to know what it is like to herd a pink golf ball through the mouth of a snake only to realize it has gone straight through the snake and fallen right into the ninth hole as a hole in one.

Though pink golf balls and pint-sized golf clubs may seem distracting to a serious golfer, imagine the delight you will discover with a group of friends or with family members as you make your way through difficult miniature golf holes. Keeping score is always a fun thing with real golf and miniature golf should be no different. The secret is to make the most honest person in the group scorekeeper.

So the next time you are stumped for something fun to do on a Saturday night or if you are trying to decide on the best party place for your eight-year-old son and six of his friends, think no more. Putt-putt golf is amazing fun, great exercise and terrifically affordable!

### **The Ups and Downs of Golf Tournaments**

World Golf tournaments are among the many golf tournaments that are popular today. Junior Golf tournaments are also a popular golfing event. Keeping the young golfers interested and entertained is an important aspect for the future of golf. Without the interest of junior golfers the professional sport of golf would dwindle. Tiger Woods created a new interest in golf from the younger crowd and renewed interest from the more mature golf fans. This type of player popularity fuels the interest in golf.

Professional Golf Association (PGA) tournament tours are well planned out in advance and affordable to the fans of golf that have no qualms about the cost. With first place prizes being the best in golf, PGA tournaments have the most loyal fan base as any sport. The PGA tour is a championship golfing event. There are four major championships. The PGA tournament is played yearly and a different golf course is chosen for the honor of supporting this extraordinary event each year.

There are more to golf's major events. The Masters is played every four years in Augusta Georgia. The Masters is a tournament founded by Bobby Jones and is highly respected by all golf fans. The U.S. Open and British Open are two more of golf's major events. The Ryder Cup is played every other year. The Ryder Cup is unique in that it is played between teams of golfers from both Europe and the United States. The Presidents Cup is also played every second year.

The Ladies Professional Golf (LPGA) tournament is an amazing event to watch. It is important that young girls have an array of sports heroes in which to admire. Ladies European Tour, Ladies Senior Tour and the Futures Tour are all part of the ladies

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tournament scheduling. Ladies golf has been around for sometime but the popularity has consistently grown and the association has not disappointed its fans.

The LPGA has kept up with the changing times. In the most recent tournaments scheduled they are gearing toward the creation of a more competitive structure where by the first place prize will be the most phenomenal in the history of women's golf. Every major golf event improves each time it is offered to the public.

There are websites and magazines that list "this weeks golf tournaments" and you will be amazed at the in depth list of accurate information pertaining to the many golf events. Local golf tournaments are listed in the "events" portion of the local newspaper and are great fun for the entire family to participate in supporting.

If you are considering planning a golf tournament or event of your own there are several ways to accomplish this feat. You will be able to raise a considerable amount of funds for any type benefit in very little time and with minimal costs to the events treasury. Golfers are always willing to donate time money and effort to a great cause. Any reason to play a little golf is a great reason to most golf fans.

## **The Essentials Of Golf**

At the core of golf there is competition. Yet the most essential part of golf is patience. Patient competition seems like a contradiction. Yet golf is not contradictory at all. On the other hand it has been said one person can find golf relaxing, while another individual might think it the most stressful sport in the universe.

Professional golfers tend to be graceful. It is as if they are very aware of how the muscles in their body propel them forward. Languid strides and flexibility are words that come to mind when imagining the professional golfer at work.

Some people link golf to sports like bowling or billiards. Not particularly something you want to watch unless you understand the game fully and know the participants well enough to be cheering one or more toward the grand first prize. Serious golf fans are loyal and just as radical (in a subdued manner) as any professional football fan can be.

As a spectator sport golf ranks high on the television ratings. It is highly unlikely anyone has seen the World Cup void of fans on any given year. The collective silences and cheers of golf fans exude a respect for the game. That respect is the attention grabber.

As with any sport, the interest of the young people is a natural part of survival. Without future golf players there is no future to golf. Since golf has been around for arguably five

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centuries it is not a concern that the sport will ever die away completely or vanish like a lost civilization. Fresh new blood keeps the arterial channels flowing more freely though.

The diversity of golf is found most obviously in the participants of golf. Any level of physically fit persons can choose golf as a sport. It is known to be beneficial exercise. When golf becomes a set part of your scheduled regimen it is very likely extra pounds will come off. Any societal level of persons can play golf. It is nit the game of the rich and famous, on the contrary there are many affordable public golf courses emerging.

Whether you are male, female, young or mature golf is a game of competitive spirit. We mustn't forget it is a patient competitive spirit. Not only are you competing against other golfers you are also being constantly challenged by difficult golfing courses. A public or private golf course has its fair share of challenging factors on the fairways, in the sand traps and across the rolling hills. The most appealing challenge for most golfers is the challenge of improving your game.

You might have seen the cartoons where the golfer has a club wrapped around a tree limb in frustration or yet another where it appears Zen golf might be a new fad. Either account can be considered a fair account when you are talking about a sport with diversity, versatility and class. If you have never golfed in your life, think about it the next time you have some free time. You might be surprised how much fun golf can essentially be.

### **Track Your Golf Handicap With Computer Software**

If you're a professional golfer, you've probably got a well-documented handicap. Everyone's interested in your ability so everyone is keeping track. But for golfers who are something less than pros, your handicap may be a tedious piece of paperwork. Why not turn to technology to help?

There are several software and Internet programs available that will help you come up with your numerical handicap, and even help you track your scores to establish your handicap for tournaments.

You have options in these programs that range from online sources to purchased software packages. Prices also vary significantly and you can spend as little as \$10-\$12, or more than \$100. Remember that if you choose an online source to check the website's privacy policy and never offer up personally identifying information that could result in identity theft.

The extent of the programs varies as much as the price. You can find programs that do all the calculations for you, offering up a spreadsheet with all your stats, or choose a simpler program that merely gives you a numerical handicap.

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Whatever you choose, keep in mind that your program and your figures is still only as good as your record-keeping practices. If you're one of those people who can't seem to find time for mundane tasks, you may find that you're not also not able to get all the stats entered to track your handicap. On the other hand, having a computer program for the golf handicap tracking may be just the motivation you need to keep better records.

One advantage of an online service over software is that you can stop and enter the information from any computer with Internet access. That means that you can get it done at the office right after you return from a lunch golf game, or even from the clubhouse right after you leave the course. You can also print out your records from any location.

There are many benefits to establishing and tracking your handicap. While the casual golfer may have little need of a regularly updated handicap, there's no doubt that tracking your handicap can often be the incentive needed to improve your game. While making better shots on the course is a good sign that your game is improving, there's nothing like a solid number to prove the fact.

Remember that the results of software programs may not be widely accepted. Before you spend the money for software and expend the time and energy to track and document your golf handicap, check with any tournaments you play to participate in. Ask if they accept any software programs and check into the rules of documentation.

If you're looking for tournament entrance, you should check the USGA's handicap rules. You'll find several online sources for obtaining your handicap, along with how to document those figures for tournament play.

Whether it's simply to improve your own game or to document your way into tournament play, it's important to get reliable numbers that truly represent your handicap. Otherwise, you may think you're making definite strides when you aren't, or even that you're not advancing your game when it really is.

## **Using Golf Learning Software**

Learning how to play golf is definitely a "hands on" process. However, there are other ways of learning golf that will actually enhance your understanding of the game and its addictive components as well as improve your physical skills. Software that teaches an individual to play golf is a valuable resource in the quest for perfected golf skills. You may be surprised exactly how much knowledge, expertise and understanding you can gather just from golf learning software.

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The instructional golf software that explains various golf lessons and is available to the general public may easily be the exact same lessons that professionals value also. Easy to follow techniques are explained and presented in unique formatting so that no one could misunderstand them. Different levels of instruction and varying degrees of cost are two diverse ways learning golf by means of software can accommodate any level of golf enthusiast.

A very important key factor to any type of instructional golf software is discovering just how effective it has been. Your favorite golfing website will have pro's and con's guides to various instructional software. Golf websites should also have direct links to free trial downloads for different golf learning software. With free trial offers you can dabble in the world of software instructions and evaluate whether a certain product would benefit your needs.

Some of the most recent technological advances have been applied to instructional golf software. Improving your golf game is the entire reason to experience the latest software available, however there are many older versions of reliable software that may suit your needs completely. As golf can be a tremendously relaxing sport it is also a competitive sport and to achieve your best swing, your accurate puts and the best score you have ever dreamed of having most of us have to endure at least a few lessons.

There are natural golfers, as well as there are some natural football players. Sport participants that shine at what they do with minimal guidance are a rarity. Unfortunately most of us need not only instruction but also time and effort to gain a sense of the game. Gaining a sense of the game has nothing to do with actually becoming proficient at playing golf so with the help of golf learning software you can learn what your best is in no time.

Golf tends to be just as much a game against your self as against an opponent. You face individual goals as well as attempting to outscore your golf mates. Software that encapsulates all the methods and techniques that need to be a focal point on any golf course worldwide is a great tool to have in your arsenal. Finding the right software for your needs is simple.

Favorite golfing websites will have links of interest and possibly free trial downloads for various software usage. Perhaps a friend or co-worker has suggested specific golfing software that has worked wonders for him or her. Perhaps you have simply noticed that your Saturday morning golf partner has become more proficient than you recall at his or her game. These are some of the best ways to find the correct software for your personal needs as a golfer.

So no matter what level of golf you are playing, no matter what income level you are in or what knowledge of computers you may have there is software available to aid in your skills as a golfer. You will be playing like the professionals in no time.

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## **Video Game Golf – Virtual Golf at its Best**

Where virtual golf is concerned the consensus is if you have not played a golf video game in a while then you don't know what you are missing. The simulated real life action is unbelievable, or better yet it is believable and that is even better!

Video games have come a long, long way and video golf is no exception. The newest gaming technology is available in the most remote corners of cyber space, video streaming and video games. And this technology can be all at your fingertips no matter your budget or skill level. Whether you are great at real time golf or are simply a novice, golf video games are good clean fun.

Tiger Woods PGA Tour Series is a dominating force in the new age of golf video games. In years past there were other games mentioned more frequently and a broader scope of golf video games, but just as Tiger Woods has become a force to be reckoned with in the real world of golf so has it become 'the' word in virtual golf.

The Tiger Woods Series has continually upgraded. Both the graphics and the difficulty have grown through the years so fans can be challenged with each new release. Where as there is no need to buy this years game if you have last years you may want to anyway. Some gaming series are phenomenal but are stagnant in their growth and new releases. Tiger Woods PGA Tour Series does not disappoint.

Life-like features, unsurpassed graphics and amazing accuracy are among the reasons the popularity of video games have grown to accommodate staggering amounts of fans. Here again video golf is no exception. With Sid Meier's SimGolf, in the true tradition of simulation, you can become a golf course magnate and design your own golf course. You can also design your own resort community, serve as the head professional golf expert and sit back and watch your resort and business grow larger by the day.

These types of virtual gaming are the wave of the future. The popularity of golf has grown recently to encompass all types of income levels and all types of personalities and ages. This is due to many factors but the most important of which has to do with the increasing interests in certain potential golf legends in the making.

Truly what sport would be complete this day and age without a fantasy league to entertain the fans? Apparently not golf. Fantasy golf is available in video format and is just as riveting to manage and play as the real thing. Mario Golf is a golf video game and a great way to begin or continue your fantasy golf experience.

Entertainment purposes are the main reason video games exist and you are sure to be entertained by any golf video game you purchase, download, or play in an interactive format in your favorite gaming room online. Perhaps it is questionable whether mastering

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these virtual golf videos will actually improve your game in real time. After playing a few video golf games you have to agree doing so can cause some great fun.

### **Warming up for Safety**

How important is a warm up? In a word – vital. The pros say this is one step that you can't afford to skip. But if you're in great shape, you play often and you're anxious to get right up to the tee, is it enough to take a couple of practice swings and then go for it? You actually may find that you are ready to play from the moment you step out of the clubhouse, but you also may find yourself injured or playing a poor game just because you didn't take those few minute for warming up.

The cars of a few years ago always needed a warm up before you hit the highway. You started them without revving the engine, allowed all the fluids to circulate completely and then knew that the car was ready to go. Your body is the same, only there haven't been any major upgrades over the past few years – you still need that warm-up time. In fact, as you age you need it even more.

What constitutes a warm up period? You don't have to hit a whole bucket of balls on the driving range or do a full round of calisthenics. Take time to hit a dozen or so balls but remember that you need to start slowly. Hit a few short range first, working up to longer drives.

It's also a good idea to do some light exercising, even if it's only a bit of walking, before you start your round of golf. The reason so many people (mainly men) have heart attacks and other serious issues on the green is that they simply haven't prepared their bodies for the rigors of golf. And even if you're playing a relaxed game, golf makes some strenuous demands on your body.

If you don't play regularly, you should probably allow yourself at least a half hour to an hour to warm up before your tee time. That means arriving early or doing your warm up somewhere else. You may find that warming up on the course's driving range works best. Some golfers say they spend a bit of time practicing with training aids before they leave home and then park a good distance from the clubhouse, letting the walk be part of the warm up.

If you play often and are in good physical condition, you may not need as much time to warm up, but you should still have some time set aside before you make your first swing. If you haven't, you may find yourself straining muscles that simply aren't ready to be used so rigorously. Pulled muscles will not only hamper the rest of your game, it may very well put you in the clubhouse for an extended period.

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Some golfers say they use the warm up time as a chance to be alone and think about the upcoming game. Others say they make a game of warming up with partners and friends. Either way, save a bit of time to get yourself ready for the game. You'll play better, both for this game and for upcoming tee times.

### **What makes a good golf course?**

A question plaguing designers of golf courses all over the world is what makes a good golf course? The answer, simplified greatly, is the lay of the land it is being built on.

A good golf course needs to have rolling hills, preferably a pond or two, or three, or four, or five, trees, an area that can be used as a fairway, an area for a rough, and enough room for sand traps. However, there are a lot of so-called golfers who don't think a course should have any sand traps at all. They are wrong and the minority. Sand traps can improve both the course and the skills of the golfers who play them.

A good golf course should be designed so as every hole is different and unique unto itself. If every hole was straight and four hundred and twenty yards, the course would be boring to play. A good golf course should have holes that dogleg right and dogleg left, with enough obstacles so the flag cannot be seen from the tee box.

Good golf courses have elevated tee boxes to help the golfers get more elevation on their drives. Once the ball hits the fairway, the elevation will depend entirely on the skill of the golfer.

Another thing that makes a good golf course is the people who work to maintain it. Some courses have professional groundskeepers who have the job of keeping the fairways smooth, the roughs rough and the greens closely cropped. This can make the all the difference in the world to golfers, as can the type of grass used on the green.

Speaking of grass on the green, the better golf courses have bent grass greens. This helps keep the ball from rolling off the green once it hits, whereas a green with bermudagrass, while still a good green, will not have ability to slow the ball down once it hits. Of course, the bent grass greens will wind up with more divots than those with bermudagrass as the ground tends to be softer beneath them.

The attitude of the grounds crew and the personnel in the clubhouse has a great deal to do with whether a golf course is good or not. If the people working there have bad attitudes, the golfers will not be able to focus on their game, as they remember how they were mistreated, or thought they were mistreated. But, a helpful, friendly staff, will make the golfing experience pleasant and enjoyable.

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Well maintained golf cart paths are also important to having a good golf course. A broken and rough cart path will beat the golfers to death, forcing them to drive on the fairways. While this is not a major problem, it can be a headache.

One of the things that makes a poor golf course, is rough terrain. Some golf courses have rocks all over the place. This has a negative affect on the balls once they hit the ground and damages the player's golf clubs.

### **Work on the Golf Stance – Don't Get Caught up on the Details**

Start with your feet placed just so, your body turned slightly to the left, your ball directly under the logo on your shirt. Carefully line your body so that it's shaped like this... And the list of golf stance instructions goes on. In fact, some people get so caught up in the stance that they lose sight of the real purpose – a perfect golf game. Defining your perfect golf game is probably more important than the perfect stance. And if you're out to enjoy the game, getting caught up in the details can really be a problem.

So does that mean that you shouldn't work on your stance? Absolutely not. The pros say the stance and swing are at the heart of a successful golf game. You may very well be able to make a great drive from something less than a great stance, but perfecting your stance will allow you to play a more consistent game of golf.

Start by relaxing. This step may take some work, especially at first when you're trying to remember the myriad of rules that make a successful stance. Your arms, though fixed in position, should never be rigid. In fact, most pros and coaches say you should start with your arms relaxed at your sides.

The actually stance depends on several factors, including (according to many) gender. There's at least a general consensus that women need a wider stance than men. Remember that your golf stance is the basis of the entire swing and that balance is crucial. Add to that the fact that the hips and pelvis of men and women are naturally different and you'll get a basic understanding of why women often need a wider stance. Because the male golfer's hips tend to be more rigid than of their female counterparts, his body reacts to the counterswing and the follow-through differently. A woman's hips are made to swing more easily and this can be a real advantage on the stance, as long as the woman compensates for that difference. Finding a comfortable standing position will likely take some trial and error, and some practice.

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Finding the comfort zone is important, but you may need to be willing to compromise comfort in order to work on your stance. While you shouldn't be standing in a position that makes your body hurt, you may very well experience some discomfort while your body is adjusting to the position of a new or adjusted stance. Remember to loosen muscles before you hit the course, and to practice for short periods during that adjustment phase.

The stance is only one part of the successful golf game, but it's very important. Coupled with the grip and other aspects of the swing, it makes up the ability to play a consistent game of golf. But before you get lost in the details of the stance, remember that golf for most people is meant to be fun. If the details of the stance are killing your enjoyment of the game, it might be time to take a good look at your definition of a successful game of golf.

## **Overview**

Golfing has become an incredibly popular sport. Most who participate say it's rather addictive, to say the least. But it's also a demanding sport. You'll quickly learn the differences between the seven iron and the seven wood, when to use the one iron (or that you'll likely never use it), and how to extract yourself from a sand trap. But the sport has tons of subtleties as well and the technical age has definitely made an impact. You can measure the "speed" of the course using a stimp meter and track your scores to establish your golf handicap using the latest software. You may even choose an interactive program to critique and help correct your swing.

From custom made golf clubs to the latest gadget, manufacturers of golf equipment and accessories have become a major economic industry. You'll find people who make a living giving golf lessons and schools that will take you in for a week or more to break those bad habits and help you establish a better stance and grip. It's more than being able to drive – it's about putting, getting in shape and keeping your eye on the ball. It is, very simply, golf.

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