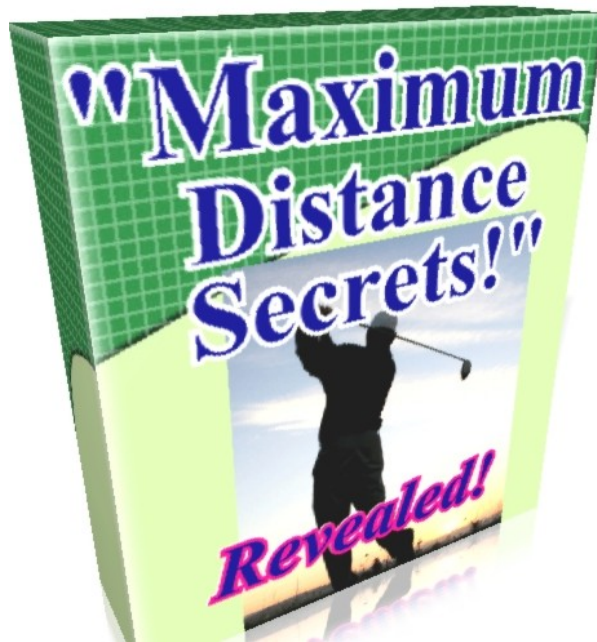


# ***Strictly Off The Record*** **"Ultimate Practice Tips!"** **Mini-Report**



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## **I. Introduction: Practicing The Right Way.**

Even though many golfers are dedicated improving their game, relatively few *really* understand *how* to practice *properly*.

If you have ever taken a look at golfers practicing their drives at the range, more times than not, it looks like their intention is to get rid of balls as fast as possible. And, use as much muscle and might in the process.

Is this the right way? Do players actually get better from playing "how many balls can I hit today?"

The reality is, probably not. But, it's difficult to know exactly *what* to practice because the swing is so complex. And where your swing differs than most, might be unique to you.

Truly understanding your specific swing's weakness or having professional guidance can provide truly productive practice sessions.

### **A. Thought Vs. Practice**

Although your eventual goal should be to develop a natural swing

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that is not influenced by thinking, some thinking should go into your practice *sessions*.

Visioning, thinking about why a ball didn't go where it should have, and a slow reflection & optimization of your weak points will help you immensely.

In fact, you should bring a notebook with you to record your thoughts. These notebooks can serve as a great way to increase your progress by zeroing in on what you think is wrong and possible ideas to fix the problems you are having.

Finally, when you have downtime (eg you are in an airport or waiting for a meeting), you can practice thinking about your game and your swing too.

Practice doesn't have to always be done on the course or the driving range!

## **B. Practice At Your Current Skill Level**

A student golfer should practice swing specifics until the swing is fundamentally sound. From there, he can advance & practice higher level refinements.

The key is to take it from where you are in your game currently. A countless number of items can be practiced, but specific procedures must be followed in every practice session.

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These may seem like common sense, but they are important enough to list here:

1. Knowing *what* to practice should be the basis for your practice session. It is essential to have a positive outlook and defined goal of what you are trying to accomplish.
2. Begin your practice sessions by smoothing your swing with short, soft iron shots, working your way up through the clubs until reaching your driver. You should only use maximum power when your swing has consistent smoothness and a fluid rhythm.
3. Rhythm should be an integral part of every practice session. Proper rhythm promotes coordination and good timing. Get into the groove!
4. The process of lining up a target is for more than just for accuracy. It's for self-confidence as well. Striving for distance and not accuracy can give you a false sense of security that you are progressing.

You've got to actually get the ball towards the green. Not sliced beyond into the rough!

5. Distance and direction are always the primary goals of practice. But, take the time to learn proper balance and a solid feeling in your swing by testing different positions and adjustments. Get to where *YOU feel* right before trying to knock it out of the park!

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## II. Getting Through The Ball During Impact

Improving your golf swing can be frustrating unless you have the right tips and techniques to help you adjust specific aspects of your swing style, body rotation, grip, and stance.

There are dozens of small adjustments that you can make. But, one of the most overlooked aspects of improving your golf swing is:

***Taking notice of the position and movement of your hands & forearms when impact occurs.***

Have you ever considered what is happening with your hands, wrists, and forearms? If you haven't, listen to this, because it really is one of most vital parts of a successful swing:

### **A. An Awesome Tip!**

Do this. Pretend you are making real contact with the ball. Now take your trailing wrist and "flip it," just like casting a fishing line. This flipping-wrist action is a fairly common problem among golfers. It is also known as a "wrist break," and you don't want it.

However, the solution to ending this wrist break habit will improve your swing immensely.

In order to correctly flip your hands through the ball when contact is made....Pay attention to what your hands and wrists are doing. If they aren't working right, try correcting the problem....

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Use a wristwatch.

You'll be using it as a visual marker.

This will help you learn the correct way to move your hands.

As you approach impact with the ball, the leading arm should have the face of your watch pointing straight towards the target line.

Now, rotate the face of the watch so that it is pointing straight at the ground. When you have a club in your hands, this move will make the trailing forearm and wrist *flip over* the top of your leading forearm and wrist.

\*An added bonus to this is that it will help you add distance to your shots in addition to reducing your slice because the club face will "close" smoothly.

This will also help your forearms to work in sync. (They should be as close to one another as possible).

### **III. Eliminating Shanks**

Of all of the messed shots in golf, the shank is probably the most dreaded. The shank happens when you make contact with the ball using the hosel of the club.

One of the main causes of a shank could be that you are standing too

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close to the ball at address.

The second factor that could be causing you to shank is that you may be shifting your weight forward on your left foot before making impact. This also may cause the hosel of the club to hit the ball.

### **A. The Setup**

One way to fix this is to set up evenly. And, when you hold your club, be sure that there is just over a fist's length of space between the end of the grip and your body.

Now you are on the right track. ;)

### **B. The Shaft**

The second thing you can do is practice by using a shaft. Place the shaft 3 inches in front of your leading foot and then back 3 inches.

Check your distance so that a fist is perfectly measured between your body and the grip.

Now, take a few practice swings. Make sure that your left hip brushes against the shaft (for right handed players). Now hit a couple of shots and put it all together.

This advice will help you in minimizing the number of shanks you experience!

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Just try it. You've got nothing to lose!

## **IV. Daily Stretching Exercises**

Flexibility is a key factor in producing more powerful drives. And, of course, it can optimize your short game performance too.

Golfers that are limber & flexible are able to turn their shoulders back much further back in relation to their hips during the backswing. If you would like to improve your flexibility, there are some very simple stretches that can be done everyday. These are some of the same stretches that professional golf players use to increase their flexibility.

### **A. Hamstrings**

By keeping hamstrings flexible and limber, the power of a golf swing will be increased tenfold. In addition to enhancing the swing, the chances of pulling a muscle in the back of the legs are reduced. Muscle pulls are very painful & can keep even the best players off the course for a week or more.

#### **1. How It's Done:**

What I like to do is sit down on the floor with my legs out in front of me at approximately a 60° angle toward each other. Now, I simply bend forward at the waist, nice and easy. I usually feel the stretch in my hamstrings now. I like to reach a point where the stretch feels

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tense, but without pain. I hold this position for 10 to 15 seconds and then return to the upright position. I repeat this process 5 to 10 times each day to increase flexibility.

## **B. Stretching The Back (Latissimus)**

This particular stretch of the back helps lengthen the large muscles that run up the sides of the back, as well as the upper back muscles. Practicing this exercise will enable the body to turn more into the backswing. Every week try to increase the distance of this stretch each time you bend to the sides.

### **1. How It's done:**

I like to stand with my feet shoulder width apart, raise both of my hands over my head and clasp my palms together. Now I simply bend to the left side slowly, until I feel a tight stretch on my right side. I usually feel tension in my right side, upper back, and shoulder area. I hold this position for 10 to 15 seconds, release, & repeat for the opposite side.

## **C. Stretching The Triceps**

The triceps stretch helps loosen muscles in the arms & shoulder area. As with the other exercises, I try to increase the distance (capacity) of my stretch each week.

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## **1. How It's done:**

I stand with my feet shoulder width apart, bring one arm and reach over my head. Then I bend that same elbow down as if I am grabbing for the center of my back. Now I take my other arm and reach over my head & grab the elbow of the arm reaching towards the back. I simply pull and shift my torso at the same time. I hold this for 10 to 15 seconds and then repeat for the opposite side.

## **V. Unconventional Shots For ANY Scenario**

The secret to becoming a better golf player isn't really a secret. It just takes practice, plain and simple. The only way to straighten out long shots, master bunker shots, or sink the majority of your putts is to invest your time into practicing wisely.

### **A. The Unconventional Approach**

I am sure that you are well aware of the benefits that driving ranges can have on both your distance and your accuracy. If practiced right, that is.

However, the set of scenarios that you be confronted with during a real game doesn't usually exist in such "safe" practice zones. In other words, try something different when you practice. Try to break the mold.

When playing on the golf course, you often have to improvise to

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deal with an uncommon shot or angle.

So when it comes to practice, why not practice some of these situations more often? Thereby preparing yourself for those inevitable pitfalls that will arise on the golf course.

If anything, practicing "different" swings & trying bizarre shots will break the monotony of your practice sessions.

## **B. Prepare For Any Condition**

If you have a standard course that you play on regularly that contains a cart path, then try making shots directly from this road during your practice sessions.

Try hitting a couple of 5 Irons back into the game as part of your practice regimen. This way you are prepared for the shot if it ever comes up (and it will).

Many professional golf players practice like this. In fact, you can read about how Tiger Woods will practice like this on any course he has to play on.

**\*Tip:** Do not use your good set of clubs for some of these practice shots. You do not want to damage them. Instead, go shopping for some older irons that are similar to the clubs you use and practice with them. This will prevent repeated damage to your quality golf clubs.

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## **C. A Few More Unconventional Shots You Can Practice**

Just to give you a few more practice ideas, here is a brief list of unconventional shots that you can add to your golf practice regimen:

1. Use a 3-wood to chip the ball.
2. Turn your club over in order to play from the side of a tree.
3. Hit several shots from an inch or more of water.
4. Putt from the bunker area.
5. Bellying a wedge.
6. Play the ball from up against a wall or fence.
7. Bury the ball deep in the sand and hit it back into play, otherwise known as a “fried egg” shot.
8. Play a few shots from rough, dried out grass.
9. Putt the ball with a 3-Wood.

**But wait!**

**There's A LOT MORE than was presented here!**

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