



GOLF

Simplified

5 SIMPLE STEPS TO BETTER GOLF

Play better and have more fun with these 5 powerful secrets you can go out and use to immediately transform your game!

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5

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to read this report. It shows that you are interested in playing better golf which will in turn make the game more enjoyable. I have been involved in the game of golf for almost 50 years. During that time I have watched many players who could benefit from just a small amount of help. I have also helped countless people make small changes that have resulted in significant improvement.

First off, I want to say that this is not meant to be a report on completely rebuilding your golf game. There will be no discussion of positions and angles of your swing. My experience is that the average golfer just wants to find a way to work with what they have and get a little better. If you want a complete rebuild and are willing to spend hundreds of hours on the range, then there are many books out there that will take you down that road.

In watching and helping golfers through the years, I see many of the same mistakes over and over. My goal is to take the most common mistakes and show you simple ways to stop them or at the very least, minimize them. My philosophy of teaching is probably different than most teachers in that I understand that it is very difficult to find the time to go to the range and practice every day. The best approach is something that is achievable rather than something that is ideal.

My recommendation is that you think about your most glaring weaknesses. Most golfers have already done this and can order them quite easily. How many times have you heard one of your playing partners say, "If only I could putt" or "Why do I slice it every time"? Take this list and find the chapter that addresses your problem then focus only on that. You should shoot for incremental improvement and know that it will not happen in a straight line. If your goal is to chip better, there is a very good chance that your rate of improvement in the practice area will not mirror your rate of improvement on the course. Just keep at it and you will be amazed.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this report. Please put into action the simple tips that it contains and watch your golf game and the enjoyment you get from the game grow.

Chapter 2

Stretching and Warming Up

While all of us know that the more flexibility we have, the better we will feel and the better our golf game will be, most of us just don't do it. One reason for me is that it is just plain boring. Another reason is that it is simply not part of a daily routine. This section is not about whipping you into peak physical condition. Nor will there be an expectation that you will spend an hour a day working on your flexibility. Again, the purpose of this report is to help you do what is achievable rather than ideal.

First and foremost, you should talk to your Doctor before starting any type of exercise program, even one as benign as this. The goal here is simply to improve your flexibility, not increase your heart rate. Always take a stretch only to the point where it reaches the limit of comfort. Never try to feel the burn and never bounce. Both of those are sure fire ways to hurt yourself.

Can you spare 5 minutes per day? That is what I recommend you start with. Try to get your stretching done at the same time every day. In this way, it will become a part of your routine and as you do it daily there is a very good chance that you will want to do more and more stretching which will improve your golf game and maybe even your life.

The reason I chose 5 minutes is because all of us have 5 minutes and it is pretty underwhelming when you think about it. All of the sections of this book are geared toward incremental improvement. As you start to achieve small victories, it will encourage you to push a little harder.

Start with the first stretch that we all learn as children. Put your feet shoulder width apart and have a slight flex at the knees. Bend at the waist and reach towards your toes. Just do what feels comfortable. Hold for 10 seconds and stand up. You want to do this 3 times. What I like about this simple stretch is that you can actually see your improvement as you get farther and farther down each day. Little victories!

Next, bring your right leg up to approximately waist high and place it on a chair or desk. Try to keep the leg straight and bend at the waist as you try and touch your right knee with your head. Do not overdo this but keep it comfortable. Do this 3 times with each leg.

Find an open spot on the wall and stand about a foot away with your feet together. Lean into the wall and move your right foot back about 6 inches. Now try to push your right heel into the ground. You will feel your right calf muscle stretch. Again, you want to do this 3 times with each leg.

All of these stretches will give you more strength and flexibility in your lower body. This in turn will help you hit the ball farther but also feel better after the round. The more ambitious of you reading this will want to do these stretches and the ones that follow both before and after every round.

To stretch your wrists and forearms, hold your right hand straight out and use your left hand to bend and pull your right hand down then turn your hand upside down and repeat. These are great stretches for your hands and can be done just about anywhere. Do both hands both ways at least 3 times.

To stretch your upper arms, take a golf club in your left hand and reach behind you so you can grab it over your shoulder with your right hand. Then pull down with your left hand. Repeat with your opposite hand. This is a good one to do on the tee as you wait for your turn to hit.

This next one is my favorite because it mimics the golf swing and makes me feel like I am really helping my game. It is important that you do this the correct way for 2 reasons. First, you don't want to hurt yourself. Second, this stretch is one you will want to hold in your mind for later because it is the basis for everything I teach.

Take a golf club and put it behind your neck. Hold it with both hands a comfortable width apart. Bend slightly at the waist, just like you would as you address the ball. It will actually help if you place a ball where it would normally be as you were getting ready to hit. Here is where you want to be careful. The basis of everything I teach is proper spine angle and rotating around your spine. With this exercise, you should focus on keeping your head in the same spot and turning your shoulders so that eventually your left shoulder will be underneath your chin. One of the biggest problems that I see repeated over and over is swaying. This will be addressed later but doing this stretch properly will go a long way towards controlling sway. Finish the stretch as you would your swing.

What is your routine when you arrive at the golf course? I have always liked to get there early. There is just something about being at a golf course in the morning. You can joke with the bag drop folks and pro shop people. You can relax and get warmed up while not feeling rushed. To each his own, though.

On the day you are playing, you should do some stretching at home then get to the course with at least enough time to hit a few putts. In my mind, tempo is critical in not only your swing but your state of mind. We have all played with someone who shows up at the last minute and ties their shoes after their tee shot. Is it really any wonder that they have not brought their A game? You should experiment with different routines until you find the right one for you. At a minimum, you want to get to the first tee relaxed and ready to start your round. If your goal is to improve 1 shot per round why not see if you can do it right out of the gate?

Chapter 3

Visualization

You have undoubtedly heard athletes talk about visualization. Every athlete in every sport uses it to some extent to improve performance. What exactly is visualization and can it help the average athlete perform better? More importantly, how do you actually incorporate it into your game?

Webster's dictionary defines visualization as a mental visual picture. I found that very interesting because in no definition did I find a description of a **positive** mental picture. When you look at the actual versus perceived definition it becomes obvious to me that we use visualization in every area of our lives. Let's get back to golf. When you stand over a shot do you ever visualize your ball going in the water hazard instead of on the green?

Let's vow from this point forward to use this power only for good. I am a firm believer that visualization works. The question becomes, how do you switch from negative to positive visualization? Think about this for a moment before I go any further. Most improvements in your golf game will require physical actions and repetition in order for them to take hold. The beauty of positive visualization is that you will not need to spend hours on the range. You just need different thoughts.

In the beginning, I recommend that you get out on the course by yourself late in the day. The reason for this is because you will want to incorporate visualization into your routine on every shot. It will not happen naturally unless you make a conscious effort. Your playing partners and everyone behind you will be happy that you are able to visualize your shot as a very quick part of your pre-shot routine.

Briefly stand behind the ball and visualize your ball flight. If you normally cut the ball,

look down the left side of the fairway and see your ball starting off there and moving right to the middle of the fairway. Do it on every shot from driver to putter. In a very short amount of time, you will not even know that you do it but it will give you positive momentum before you take the club back.

Chapter 4

Alignment

If you were to ask a professional golfer what one thing they worked on most consistently day in and day out, my guess is that they would say alignment. You may have noticed that most of them have the funny colored fiberglass sticks poking out of their bags on the way to the range. These are used for many things but most have something to do with alignment.

What exactly is alignment and how do I know if mine is incorrect? In searching for a perfect swing, in an ideal world your feet, hips and shoulders would all be aligned parallel to your target. There are reasons why you want to be a little open or closed at address but in general you should always practice with the goal of perfect alignment.

Here is a drill that you should learn and incorporate into every practice session. After you are warmed up, find the practice flag that is most directly in front of you. Hit a shot then lay your club up against your toes. Stand behind the club and see where you were aiming. The vast majority of right handed players are aimed too far right. This promotes the famous “over the top” swing that results in pulls and slices.

Now work backwards. Lay a club down where you take your stance and another one closer to where you will be hitting the ball. Stand behind and line them both up parallel to the target line. Now start hitting balls with your feet aligned properly and see what happens. It will look and feel very strange in the beginning because you have been aiming in the wrong direction.

Why should you try to fix your alignment? No matter what your handicap is, you will get better if you start off with the correct foundation. You want to put at least a club at your feet every time you practice. This will help with the very difficult task of bringing it to the course. Of all of the sections of this report I think this is the easiest to do at the range and the hardest to bring on the course. Your best bet is to have someone stand behind you as you get ready to hit and tell you where you are aiming. Just so you know, it is against the rules of golf to lay a club down before you hit your shot.

Chapter 5

Keeping The Ball In Play

This section is a little more involved because there are several steps to take to hit the ball straighter. This is best done by a golfer who is willing to spend a little more time and effort to improve their game. I promise you if you incorporate the steps in this section, you will hit the ball straighter and lower your score.

First lets go back to my favorite stretch in Chapter 2. Place the club behind your neck, grasp it comfortably with both hands. Bend slightly at the waist and turn slowly. Focus on keeping your head perfectly still and rotating around your spine. Do not sway.

We all know that you need to keep your head down. (Why do we not do it?) There is more to the swing than keeping your head down. The mantra should really be keep your head still. The goal of the golf swing is to return the club head back to where it started with as much controllable speed as possible. That is really it in a nutshell. If you ponder that for a bit you will realize that the more movement you have, the more difficult it is to achieve what seems to be a simple goal.

Stand with your feet shoulder width apart with a slight flex in your knees. Bend slightly at the waist and let your arms hang down. When you put your hands together, you are at the ideal point to begin your swing. Start your turn with your shoulders and without any swaying. A good drill for this is to stand at a point where the sun casts your shadow right where the ball would be. Start your backswing and see if your shadow moves.

The number one problem I see at this point, especially for older, less flexible players is that they do not keep their left arm straight. The tendency is to make a bigger turn so that you can hit it further. That is fine as long as the turn is with your shoulders, not your arms. When you bend your left arm you lose control of the club face. If you keep your left arm straight, the club face will have substantially less movement. Remember, the goal is to get the club head back exactly where it started.

I am going to expand on this in case you really want to push this all the way. If not, you can make dramatic improvements in your consistency by simply working on these to steps. Keep your left arm straight and stop your backswing when your turn stops. Secondly, keep your head still and rotate around your spine.

There are 3 more ways that you can hit the ball straighter and with more consistency. I recommend that you stop at the first 2 above and come back to these once you see the improvement in your scores. The 3 ways are with tempo, alignment and chasing the ball down the line.

What is tempo? Tempo is the rate or speed of motion or activity; pace. Let's look at some examples. Does Fred Couples swing at the same pace as Nick Price? Of course Fred's swing is much slower, almost laconic compared to Nick's yet Fred hits it much further. The key to tempo is being smooth with no herky, jerky motions. Nick Price's tempo is very fast but it is fast going back and fast going through.

You must find your own tempo. Whenever I find myself off kilter, I go to the range with only a lob wedge. I like a lob wedge because it is the shortest club and because there is no tendency to try and kill it. Just hit balls with no agenda except to keep the speed and swing consistent from start to finish. I love this drill for tempo.

I talked about alignment in the last chapter. Use a club or an alignment stick every time you go to the range. You will get better almost by osmosis.

What does chase it down the line mean? If you watch a pro swing in slow motion you will see that the club head follows the same path as the ball for quite a ways past impact. In doing this, they are insuring a better strike as well as a straighter shot. Most amateurs would notice that the club head does not follow the ball but actually starts upwards almost at impact. This promotes poorly struck shots and imparts side spin on the ball which decreases both distance and accuracy.

Chasing down the line may be a difficult concept to grasp but here is a drill that will help. Once you get the hang of this you will hit more straight, solid shots. When you go to the range, take a 5 or 6 iron and pretend you are in the woods and need to hit a low shot to get out. Put the ball a little back in your stance. Start out by taking a ½ back swing and follow through. Make sure that you focus on hitting the ball low. You do this by keeping your hands ahead of the club head at impact and beyond. Once you start to hit solid shots with ½ swings gradually lengthen your swing. If you continue to work on this your ball striking will improve. Period.

This section is all about shooting lower scores by hitting better quality shots. In my experience, this is the fastest way to large scale improvement. The next section will be all about everyone's favorite topic. I will talk about how to go long.

Chapter 6

Let The Big Dog Eat!

There is no better feeling in golf than really catching one and smashing it past everyone in your group. Unfortunately most of us may catch that one drive once a round and spend the other 13 driver holes hitting out of the rough or worse. In this section I will cover some of the basics for hitting your driver consistently longer.

The biggest mistake we all make is to swing harder. This rarely works for reasons I will go into shortly. The goal is to swing better rather than swing harder. When you swing harder, your weight will not shift properly and you will have a tendency to put side spin on the ball which will only make you lose distance.

Have you ever heard of the step in the bucket swing? If you have played golf you have seen it. Some people swing so hard and reverse weight shift so severely that they actually turn sideways on their follow through and their left foot ends up moving to the left. This is the exact opposite of what you should do to hit the ball longer.

The reverse weight shift is much more common but less dramatic than the step in the bucket. Let's say you are a pitcher. You start your windup and shift your weight to second base. As you make the throw, your weight naturally shifts toward home plate. The exact same motion should happen with a golf swing except that your feet stay on the ground.

Another common distance sucker is the over the top move. This is a subtle killer. Imagine a line going through your ball towards your target. When you come over the top. You actually cross the line from the outside in. This creates the slice that you see so often. It is easy to tell if you are crossing the line by looking at the divot you take. Does it go left of the target? You are coming over the top. You want your club head to follow the imaginary line or come from slightly inside the line.

How do you hit it longer? You start by hitting the ball more solidly with less side spin. A simple approach is to imagine your club hitting the inside of the ball. This helps eliminate the over the top side spin. You also want to exaggerate your weight shift when you are practicing. Remember, pivot around your spine as you shift your weight and keep your head still. Make sure that you are turning rather than swaying. Your legs are

much stronger than your arms, so be sure to use them to increase your distance.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

There you go. 5 simple steps to improve your golf game. Do not try to do everything at once, but focus on 1 area and watch yourself make incremental improvements then move onto something else. As I said in the beginning, focus on the area of your game that needs the most improvement and then move to the next one. I would recommend taking the scorecard every time you play and then sit down and go hole by hole to see where and how you could have improved.

Think about saving 1 shot per round. If you are able to do this, your score will improve by 10 shots in 10 rounds. This is ambitious but will be doable for someone with a higher handicap. Do not get discouraged if you take a step or two back. It is normal when you make changes to your swing or thought processes that you stumble. Just keep at it.

Golf is a game you can play your whole life. Part of the enjoyment is the challenge. Embrace the challenge and push yourself to improve. You will be amazed by what you can accomplish.