

PRACTICE LIKE THE PROS

3 KEYS TO GREAT PRACTICE

1. Have a Detailed Plan
2. Measure Success
3. Challenge Yourself



THE SECRET TO GOLF SUCCESS - PRACTICE

Is there a secret to great golf? The answer is yes.

Is the secret a quick swing tip such as: uppercut the ball for more distance, fire your hip pistol, start from lower body on downswing, etc? The answer is absolutely not.

Think about how long golf publications, golf channel, YouTube tips, etc have been around. It has been a long time and the average golfer is not getting better. Unfortunately some golfers are spending a lot of time and money on their improvement process and not getting any better.

Why?

Golfers are never taught how to get better. They never learn the secret to golf. **Practice.**

Not only practice, how to practice for performance. Hitting range balls for an hour or 2 a day is not practice, that is just hitting balls. I am making it my mission to educate golfers on how to practice.

There are 3 major keys to a practice that will enhance your game. We will discuss each.

1. Have a detailed plan.
2. Measure success
3. Challenge yourself

Let's discuss why each of these areas is critical to success.

#1 PRACTICE MUST – HAVE A PLAN

Most golfers make the mistake of going to practice with no plan. You have really just wasted time unless your intention was to just hit balls to enjoy yourself. That is absolutely an option and encouraged if you just want to have fun. If you want to get better at the game of golf, you need to know how.

What does a plan look like? There are multiple components to a great practice plan.

1. Should be time structured based on how long you can stay focused. Stick to the time allocation.

Most players can only stay focused for a certain amount of time. Usually we lose focus after 30 minutes to 1 hour. After that, you are just mindlessly doing something and it's easy to become sloppy. I like to see players switch practice areas every 30 minutes. This helps keep players minds sharp and engaged which is exactly what we are trying to do in practice. Sharpen your mind and your skills.

Let's take a scenario of a player who is working on correcting a slice. They may sit up there swinging a 7 iron, hitting to the same target for 2 hours. After so long it becomes mindless and that player will start to revert. Also, they probably will not address any other area of the game (there are a lot). This player is really working on such a small percentage of the game which is a 7 iron from a flat lie. How many times do we actually have that shot?

Does this sound like you? Don't worry, you are not alone.

2. Should focus on your weakness

Most golfers like to do what we are good at because it makes us feel good. It makes us feel like we are making progress.

People are uncomfortable being uncomfortable. However, this is how we get stronger. It is similar to working out. Our muscles need to be worn down to build up and get stronger. This is exactly what we need to do in golf. We need to strengthen our weakness. When you keep detailed stats you can really pinpoint the areas that your are losing shots. That is where you want to get to work. You may be great from 100 yards and its fun to hit that shot because of it, but every other area is going downhill unless addressed.

The Grind does this for you. It lays out practice plans in a fashion that will strengthen your weakness and make your game strong as a whole.

3. Cover multiple areas per session

Another mistake players make is just doing 1 thing in their practice (which is usually hitting balls). I get that it's the most fun but practice isn't always fun. However, there are ways to make it more enjoyable and get better at the same time. See the section on Measuring Success.

As a general rule of thumb, you should practice 2-3 areas of the game per 1 hour session. 3-4 areas per 1.5 hour or more. I don't like to see a player practice more than 4 areas in 1 session no matter how much time they work. The reason is your mind just can't absorb all of that different information. Think about school, could you really study for 6 different tests in 1 night and retain all of that. It's not very likely.

As your seeing, keeping your mind sharp and focused is such a big key to practice success.

“Players have to be comfortable being uncomfortable.” – Kiel Alderink

MEASURE SUCCESS

Most players just hit away at the range until they get themselves into a rhythm. This could be a good rhythm or a bad rhythm. There is really no way of telling weather we are doing any good for our game or not.

There is a reason you may feel great on the range before a round, then step to the 1st tee and send it out of bounds. This is because you didn't fix anything. You just got into a rhythm that is unrealistic to re create on the golf course. We do not have multiple tries on the golf course; we have 1 chance with a lot of consequence.

There are times where hitting the same shot on the range is ok as long as we don't go overboard. Here are a few things you should be doing in your practice.

1. Keep a log

You want to have a log of what you did at every practice. This is the easiest and most clear cut way to see how you are progressing. If you are stuck in the same spot (i.e. cannot get 8 out of 10 shots on a target green from 100 yards) then you know where you need to get mechanically better or strategically better.

2. Give your shots a purpose.

Lynn Marriot and Pia Nelson of Vision 54 made this concept very popular some time ago but it's still a relatively unknown concept. Every shot you hit on the golf course matters, why not treat everything you do in your practice the same. I see so many players just mindlessly hitting shots with no intention. It is easy to fall into that trap as most driving ranges are wide open so you don't have any visual distraction. You have to put yourself in the mindset. A great idea is to practice like you're playing your regular golf course. Keep the shots you need in your mind and practice them.



3. Games are more fun than practice

The word practice is almost toxic these days, especially to juniors. This is equivalent to doing homework. We need to keep you engaged and in a learning mindset. Play lots of games when you are practicing. Here are a few things I have my students do. Feel free to be creative and create your own. Your coach can also upload games and challenges for you as well through The Grind App.

Contact Us

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Short Course. Play 9 holes starting around the practice green. Hit pitches, sand shots, bump and runs, etc from different locations. Keep score. Par is 18.

In a row challenges. Try to hit on a target green 5 times in a row, then 10, then 20. See how far you can get and keep track in your app or log.

Simulated rounds – Simulate your golf course on the range. Hit driver then depending on how you hit the drive, hit a approach shot. Go through the entire course and be honest. Keep track and see how many greens in regulation you could get and how close to the pin. Keep track.

These are just a few examples and there are many more fun and engaging ways to practice. If you have a friend with you it's even better.

CHALLENGE YOURSELF

I'm not a fan at all of the "Everybody wins" or "Make everybody feel good" mentalities of today. We are so worried about not having someone's feelings hurt that we fail to make them better. In sports and especially golf there are going to be hardships. How you overcome those is what makes the best players. Tiger Woods dad, Earl, used to distract Tiger and irritate him until he would break. It made him probably the most mentally strong player of all time.

To get better, you have to be comfortable being uncomfortable. It is just the reality.

The point is that in practice, it needs to be challenging. If we are doing easy things just to get success then you will never improve.

Depending on your skill level, make sure you push yourself a little past your capability. For example, I like to see competitive players have to get up and down around the practice green 18 times in a row. If they can't do it in the designated time frame, then they keep trying every day until they reach that goal. If they do it once then I want to see how many days in a row they can do it.

It needs to be hard. John Wooden, who won 10 National Championships at UCLA made practice so hard on the guys that games seemed easy. That's our goal is to push ourselves. If you want to improve, it takes more than a good swing lesson.

I love the journey of golf and the road to improvement. I hope you got some great ideas of what good practice is like. There are going to be many more articles and videos on the subject. Just remember..... A Player Is Only As Good As Their Practice

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