



## *Technical Game, Physical Game, Mental Game*

### *Technical Game*

If you're like most of us who have struggled with the game of golf, more than likely you've experienced the following all too often: You swing at the ball, it flies just the way you like, the distance is perfect, and the ball lands exactly where you intended it to. In your delight, you exclaim, "I've got it!" only to be disappointed when the next shot you hit is a disaster and, once again, you come to the realization that you do not "have it."

There are a couple of fundamental issues with the golf swing that may impede natural motion that we have to deal with first in order to sustain a more consistent action, one that is much closer to the "I've got it" swing. One is time; nothing happens physically until you the player make it happen - golf is not a "reaction sport." Two; the conscious mind will tend to see only straight lines and focus on the objective of squaring the clubface to those straight lines. For example: As a player addresses the golf ball, the conscious mind paints the picture of a straight line that extends on either side of the ball and out to a target, thus the player wants to swing along that line - problem. The result on the take away finds the player trying to follow that line away from the ball thus causing the arms to move outward from the body. Once this occurs, the arms are forced to act independent of the body and a proper natural sequence has been lost.

A golfer that tries to follow the line from ball to target on the downswing is also in trouble. The club is forced to what is thought to be a "square" position and sent chasing the golf ball down the target line. Once again, the arms are forced away from the body. The momentum and considerable dynamic weight of the golf club, being controlled by the arms, leaves the body no choice but to oppose that action by bracing or hanging back on the right side or to force the spine to straighten which flattens out the shoulders

significantly changing the club's swing plane and path to the golf ball. The body reacts to ordinary tasks easily and completely, but when athletic actions are called for, we look to reduce the motion down to incremental pieces.

The key is to discover the swing shape fundamentals relative to swing plane that best allows your body to manage the dynamic force of the golf swing most efficiently and consistently. It's also important to become comfortable with the notion that there are no straight lines in the golf swing and all swings are inside-to-inside or circular.

## *Physical Game*

### Stretch Tubing -- Good as the Gym

Improving your golf swing power is like any other sport. Replicate the sport-specific movement with resistance, like golf exercise tubing, and the power comes very quickly. You can break your swing down into the phases you feel are weak or inefficient, and use the tubing during that phase. It's nearly "instant" feeling in regards to stronger golf muscles.

This tubing is affordable, portable, and can be used in your office, home or even while on the road. I like to think of it as completely replacing those expensive cable machines you see in the gyms. They are equally as good, and cost a fraction of what those cable machines cost. Doing a power golf swing tubing program is one of the fastest ways to improve your driving distance. Check out the web for specific stretch tubing exercises that might be right for your program to improve your *physical game*.

### Get on the Ball

One of the items I think every golfer should have is a golf exercise ball. You know -- the fitness ball you see in all the stores. These look like big beach balls, but they can be used for so many golf and health benefits that I strongly recommend you get one. They're inexpensive, around \$30 or so.

They come in different sizes, but there are two main sizes. You've got a 55cm ball that is typically for golfers 5'6" and under. There is a 65cm ball for golfers 5'6" and taller. It is important to get the size that fits your height, so go off the above scale to make your choice.

There are so many things you can do with an exercise ball that will add

stability, control, balance, and coordination to your swing, which will dramatically improve your golf swing consistency. The great thing about the ball is the stability factor. Just getting on the ball will fire up muscles you haven't used for a long time. These muscles will directly improve your golf swing.

Simply sitting on the ball at your computer for ten to twenty minutes a day while checking emails will quickly strengthen your back muscles which will improve your golf posture. Many older golfers struggle with posture and "getting on the ball" can make a huge difference.



## *Mental Game*

### 1. Distracted by Comparison.

Golfers are too often preoccupied with comparing themselves to their competitors. A typical thought might be, "This person has a great reputation. This person is so much better than me. How can I compete with them?" or "I wonder what everyone will think of me. Do they think I belong?" Intimidation and reputation also become factors. These thoughts lead to questioning and self-doubt.

Solution: The only control group we have, the only comparison we have is of ourselves and our own performance. I would rather have somebody that had 25 percent talent who believes in that talent 100 percent, than someone who has 100 percent talent but only believes in themselves about 25 percent of the time.

### 2. Obsessed with Score.

The most common question a player gets asked first after his or her round is,

"What did you shoot?" Players can get too worried about the scorecard and that their self-image and self-esteem is lost in what they shoot. In fact, he says, no one really cares what you shot, they only care how their score compares to yours. "I'm trying to get my (students) away from talking about pars, birdies, bogeys - to quit labeling it. Get rid of the scorecard. Let's get into playing a shot.

Example: When Tiger Woods talks to the media, he'll say things like, "I need to shoot a good score tomorrow - a 64 or 65 - to put me in contention." But I guarantee he's not saying to (caddie) Stevie (Williams) on the first tee, "OK, here's the first shot of a 65." He's not going to the 15th hole and saying, "Here's shot No. 52 off the tee." The most important thing he thinks is, "Just one shot."

Solution: Instead of thinking about the score, think about this: Did you stay emotionally composed all day? Did you stay committed to your target? The most valuable number is one. That's all you can control. One shot, one moment. The now.

### 3. Obsessed with distance.

Everyone wants to hit the ball a mile, but not everyone can. Those that can't hit it far often get intimidated by long-ball hitters. Don't mimic anyone else. Focus on your own game.

Solution: Understand your personal strengths and weaknesses, and then use that to your advantage. Understand that developing an all-around game is vital.

- Staying emotionally balanced is the key. Patience is confidence waiting to happen. Be patient enough not to force anything to happen too quickly.
- Golfers often talk about "getting it back" after making a bogey. There is no "back." Forget the scorecard and focus on what you're able to control now.
- It's not about quick fixes. It's about building a solid philosophy and sticking with it.
- This stuff is not easy to learn. It takes as much commitment and dedication to change an attitude as it does to change a swing path. Almost more so.

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