

HOW TO: *Learn a Better Golf Swing*



By Randy Grills
PGA Teaching Professional
The Dye Preserve, Jupiter
rfgills@earthlink.net

I've been teaching golf for more than twenty years. During this time, I've had the advantage of teaching and coaching some very talented golfers. I consider myself particularly fortunate to have had a longtime relationship as friend and coach to Hobe Sound resident, Olin Browne, a multiple PGA Tour champion whose success has enriched my own

golf experience. In my association with Browne and Houston instructor, Jim Hardy, I have been able to broaden my scope of instructional opportunities to include top players, highly skilled club professionals and accomplished amateurs. I consider it equally important, though, working with every day players – recreational golfers who play simply for the love of the game.

The range of players with whom I have been associated has expanded my own education, bringing into sharper focus the differences in ways competitive golfers and recreational golfers take and apply instructional information. A "quick tip" might bring about a short-lived "quick fix" in most cases with no lasting benefit to effect real change. Real change – lasting improvement, is a process that involves changing your subconscious thought processes which directs your body to execute a golf swing differently than before. A point that recreational golfers would do well to understand and embrace, is that true change has more to do with a player's recognition of this simple fact: Any successful change of habit, is the product of significant time and hard work.

About a year ago, Tiger Woods imparted thoughts about changes he was making in his own golf swing in a brief article that appeared in one of the major golf magazines. In order to improve his game, Tiger decided to change his golf swing and those changes, he emphasized, would take time. While he was working on improving his technique, he continued to play tournament golf and, he said, although he could detect the improvements, it didn't always result in great scoring or prolific winning. Any interruption in Tiger Woods' usual pattern of winning sends the media into a tailspin of armchair speculation. But he proved the point that golf is a very human endeavor and even great players need time to accomplish real change, a process that begins in the subconscious mind and, with repetition, finally results in a change in physical performance.

The process is a basic one: In order to begin improving, the player must be aware of exactly what he/she is doing that requires change. An instructor can serve as a valuable and objective set of eyes that can identify the proper path to improvement. Matching up feel with shot outcome will help build confidence in the improvement process. The work you do alone will be the most important; your goal must be to progress independently of the instructor once solutions have been identified – your performance on the course and under pressure will depend upon it.

Consistent practice is critical in order to replace old habits with new, more effective technique. Only practice, together with a golfer's serious commitment to improve, will determine how long the process of change will ultimately take.