



Playing Your Best Golf at 60 and Over!

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Chapter 1 – Senior Golfers Play to Socialize

Senior golfers in a group have more fun and play more rounds of golf than the average golfer. Having raised their families and retired from their professions, senior golfers have more time than their younger counterparts. For that reason senior golfers are considered to be the “bread-and-butter” of the local golf courses around the country.

Golf courses are becoming more and more “senior friendly” to compete for the senior golfer’s business. Many of these seniors along with their spouses or significant other play mainly for social reasons. Their love of the game and the fact they love playing the game with friends has forced the golf industry to cater to them for their business.

While seniors might not have the ability to hit the ball as far as a younger golfer, they know their limitations and will play a more intelligent game. They will use the knowledge of the course and several other pieces of experience to score points. Because the senior golfers use their knowledge and their experience, they more than make up for the loss of yards on the tee off.

Chapter 2 – The Health Benefits and Injury Possibilities

All golfers who plays golf should be aware of the danger of injuries, which can occur while playing golf, especially senior golfers. Because the twisting and turning motion of the game, this places an undue amount of stress on the spine, hips, and shoulders. Since most golfers are inactive during the winter months, injuries such as muscle strains and injuries to the disc are common.

The golf swing includes bending over and then twisting, which is one the worst moves people can make, according to physical therapists. If the knees are bent and the back is straight it will keep pressure off the discs. You can also tighten the stomach muscles to help give the back support during the golf swing. It is a good idea for all golfers, especially senior golfers to do some warm-up exercises before hitting the tee.

There are health benefits to be obtained from playing golf. A growing number of older American are profiting from the health benefits derived by playing golf. Here are some tips offered by many of the sports medicine experts for senior golfers. These tips will make the game more enjoyable and will lower the chances of the injuries connected to the game of golf.

Physical fitness can be improved by playing a round of golf as long as the golfers do not ride around in the golf cart for the entire round. Walking can be beneficial to the overall fitness by improving the aerobic capacity. Walking can increase your heart rate to meet the guidelines for aerobic exercise. Of course these benefits need to be balanced with problems associated with walking long distances such as joint pain, heat related problems among other complications due to the person’s general health. Carrying your golf clubs is not recommended. You will be better off using a pull cart instead. As always the golfer should check with his or her doctor to ensure it is safe for them to walk nine or 18 holes.

Chapter 3 – Senior Golfers Take a Different Approach To Their Game

Just because it is believed to be inevitable for a senior golfer to experience a decline in performance, does not mean it has to be that way. If you are a senior golfer, don't give up. The old adage "it's all downhill from here" will only be true if you let it.

The senior golfer will experience more difficulties in maintaining the same level of performance as he or she did in their younger years, but it is still possible. The avenue of approach for you now, is your body. Your body is the main factor in the speeding up or slowing down of your performance as you age.

Have you had the experience recently on the golf course of feeling as if you could not make a full back swing? Do you feel as though your drives are not reaching the distance as they once did? Are you experiencing aches and pains in your shoulders, back, hips, or maybe even wrists while you are playing or after you have played? Then you must improve your body.

Many senior golfers feel as though they have experience a loss of flexibility as they age. This is probably true our bodies will lose flexibility as it ages, but the strength of the body will decline just as rapidly as the flexibility.

As a senior golfer you will want to focus on strength, flexibility, nutrition and endurance. These are important factors needed in a good total golf fitness program. It is important for the senior golfer to find a golf fitness program designed to fit their specific needs and to progress from their current fitness level. If one starts on a program beyond their physical limits, it will only end in failure. This can only be discouraging. You don't want to be ready to quit before you have given yourself a good starting chance. Start off slow and progress forward.

As a senior golfer looking for a good fitness program, you will first want to decide on your current level of fitness. You must know your limitations. This is an important factor because it is at your limitation you will want to start your golf fitness regime, which will in turn help you improve your golf game. You will want a fitness program to focus on your limitations.

Once you have determined your limitations, you can then go shopping for a program to improve those limitations rather than wasting your time with ones that don't. It won't be as hard to find as you might think because golf fitness programs have become so popular you will be able to find books, videos and even trainers to help you achieve your goals.

Starting golf lessons right now would not be in your best interest. You will want to wait until you have had an opportunity to allow the fitness program to work. It only makes sense to start with the body first before taking lessons. If not, your lessons will only result in frustration and confusion. You will not be able to practice what you have learned. By improving the body first, you will be able to see improvement in your golf swing.

You may be considering a gym would be best to suit your needs. Don't! You can create your own golf fitness gym right in the comfort of your own home. To create your own home gym all you need is a stability ball, hand weights, and some exercise tubing. Viola! You have your own home gym with only a small amount of equipment and a minimal amount of money spent. You will not only save money, but driving time as well.

Now you are ready to put your new home gym to good use. You may need to find some of those books and videos to help you decide on the correct exercises you need to achieve the results you want. If you feel more comfortable in asking questions, you may want to talk to a trainer to get an exercise routine for you to follow. He or she may have some helpful tips on some dos and don'ts.

Taking action now is important. Because your mind and body are linked together, you need to envision the kind of golfer you can be and want to be. You have to want it bad enough to begin working on it RIGHT NOW! It is not as hard as you might think. You will need to do is a few of the exercises focusing on strength and stretching a couple of times a week. There is no need to go to the gym because you can do these exercises at home. It will make all the difference in your performance on the golf course and in how you feel.

There is a simple stretching exercise you can do at home. It is called Lying Leg Crossover*

- Lie on your back with legs out straight
- Raise one leg and bend it at the knee to 90 degrees in knee and hip
- Cross that leg over extended leg, while opposite shoulder stays on the ground
- Go until slight pull in butt and lower back
- Hold and repeat once more
- Switch legs and do the exact same procedure with the opposite leg.*

That exercise was pretty simple. As a senior golfer, you will notice your range of flexibility is not as it once was. All you will need to do to correct your flexibility is to perform the exercise as directed above and incorporate other exercises with the same agenda.

You may have noticed when teeing off, your ball is not reaching the distances it should. The loss of yards is not good for your game and could make you the butt of jokes for the rest of the game. The cause of this could be the shortening of your back swing. If your flexibility is limited, it will have a direct effect on your back swing. Not to mention the soreness in the back, which will accompany the loss of flexibility. The exercises for flexibility will correct the shortening of your back swing. It may even help eliminate some of the aches and pains you are experiencing.

Even though golf does not require strenuous activity, it is a good idea to stretch before you play. Warming up will cut down on the injuries, which can occur. Golf places such a huge amount of stress on a body; injuries are not as uncommon as you might think. By doing these exercises a few days a week and then right before you tee off, you are saving yourself from a painful injury as well as improving your game.

Chapter 4 – Yoga as a Golf Fitness Program

Yoga has some standard exercises or poses, which will help the senior golfer in regaining his or her flexibility. The good news is “you are never too old” to start these exercises. As in most exercise you have not done in a while, it is always best to start slow. Yoga includes not only the poses and the movements, but also proper breathing while performing these movements is an important aspect. It is recommended the exercises are to be practiced four days a week and in the evening just before bed. It is said by stretching before sleep will help with muscles altering and faster results. One of the aspects of yoga is it appears to very easy on the outside, but it is very active on the inside.

Correct posture is important on or off the golf course. It can be a huge challenge to senior golfers. There is a simple exercise, which should be practiced in front of a mirror. Stand as straight as you can and suck in your stomach so your navel is pulled in the direction of your back. Tuck your tailbone under and raise your ribcage up. Roll your shoulders back and stretch out the neck for as long as possible. Then you will breathe deeply for five to 10 breathes. Relax and do this 5 to 10 times. By practicing this exercise everyday, you will soon see results on and off the course.

There are many other exercises in the Yoga regime designed to give you flexibility on and off the golf course. You might want to check into these exercises. They can be performed in your own home, unless you prefer the structure a personal trainer or group with a trainer type setting. The only equipment required to perform these exercises is a yoga mat.

Yoga is a balance of body, breathe, and mind. With yoga you will be working on the flexibility of the body, the strength of the mind and the control of breathe.

While you are exercising your body, you will also need to exercise your mind as well. You have to push yourself or you will stay the same. You will need to push yourself outside of your comfort zone to excel. Without pushing yourself mental, physical and spiritually you will become sedentary. When you are exercising you will need to push yourself, but remember if your muscles feel uncomfortable it is okay, but if they hurt, it is not.

For you to benefit from these exercises, approach them in the same manner you would a good game of golf. In other words, “whole-heartedly”!

Even though your golf swing is an important part of your golf game, it is useless if you can aim and hit your target. You need accuracy just as much as distance. Start by concentrating on your target during your pre-shot custom, but don't focus in a general way. Be more specific. Take for instance, if your target is a tree, don't just look at the tree as a whole. Look for a specific spot on that tree, such as a knot or the third branch on the left. If you are putting into the hole, you might focus on the edge of the hole. This exercise will not only help you hit your target, but it will also quiet your mind by giving the subconscious something to focus on.

Now you have focused on your target, the next step will be to hit the ball. So you will look at your ball, take one more look at your target to reinforce the image. Take a deep breath, and let out your breath slowly as you swing. Allow your subconscious mind to take control. Once your subconscious mind has taken over, you will stop worrying, and you won't over think your shot. The next time you play, try this exercise and see how it works.

Most talented athletes will tell you mental discipline is just as important as your talent, maybe more. Your mind can work for you or it can work against you. Of course you want it to work for you. To get your mind to work with you, you need to work on your level of mental discipline. To do this you start with understanding your thoughts. You will need to be aware of the thoughts you have in order for you to get a handle on them. To see how they are affecting you on the golf course. When you first walk up to the ball, you have a custom you perform whether you are aware of it or not. You will need to stop the negative thoughts and create new positive thoughts. Since most people can focus on multiple things, a good athlete will narrow his or her focus on only 2 things. It is a good idea to incorporate into your pre-shot custom seven deep inhalations and the exhalation of seven through your mouth with your lips parted. During this breathing exercise you will want to choose two things to say to yourself. Make them positive thoughts.

By practicing yoga, you will use posture to change your body from inflexible to flexible, to change fatigue into strength, and a chattering mind to a quietness you have never before experienced.

Many of the professional golfers are using yoga to better their golf. Preparing for a golf tournament is an extensive routine. One needs to tighten the golf swing, run through your short game, put yourself in the right frame of mind, and make sure your body is physically ready for the challenge. Or you can apply yoga and achieve them all. Even some amateur golfers needed to increase their strength and flexibility are looking to yoga. Athlete's must be trained and maintain flexibility to minimize injury. Yoga is useful in obtaining that goal.

Many of us think of yoga as an exercise in contortion by placing a leg on the back of your neck. Not true. There is more than one style of yoga. There is the physically active or a more meditative and gentle style of yoga. When you check into yoga, you will find several beginner yoga classes. You will also find tapes out on the market, some of the yoga tapes are designed specifically for golfers and the issues they face. Check around for the style of yoga designed to fit your needs. You might want to check with the instructor about the instruction. Ask for specific physical requirements, the length and the level of concentration of the instruction in the class.

Chapter 5 – Use Yoga to Target Problem Areas

You probably have certain areas of your body you will want to work on. For example, you may want to increase your core strength. Yoga can provide you with exercises to work on your core strength. You will start by conditioning your abdominal area, and continue on with your obliques. By strengthening your abdominal area they will help strengthen and support your lower back. These exercises is beneficial to you as a

golfer because it will stabilize your body, strengthen your back, give you more power and give support to your spine which help the spine to stay at the proper angle through your golf swing. Because this is an upper body workout, you will build more strength in your chest, shoulders, arms, hands and wrists. Breathing is an important aspect of these exercises. By focusing on your breathing you will assist your body in maintaining its energy and strength.

Yoga can also provide exercises to give your hips more flexibility. Hip flexibility is another avenue of exercises you will want to start on. Hip flexibility is important when performing your golf swing. Your golf swing involves correct hip rotation to create power, speed, and balance from your hips. The condition of your lower back and stamina on the course are connected to your hip flex and strength.

The yoga positions are designed to increase strength in the group of muscles supporting your hips. It is important to the golfer to be able to maintain correct during the forceful phase of the golf swing. The way to determine this is by your ability to maintain correct posture and your core strength.

Your lower back can be painful when injured. To reduce the possibilities of an injury use the yoga exercises to strengthen your lower back. This year Americans will spend billions of dollars on back pain healthcare costs. Many professional and amateur golfers will play with a back injury. This will go to prove just how important it is to get your body in shape to play golf as in any sport.

With yoga, breathing is an important part of the strengthening process. Any time you experience a stressful situation on the golf course or off the golf course, it causes your heart rate to accelerate and your breathing to become erratic. When you learn to control your breathing during a stressful time, it will help keep the mind calm and the body relaxed. With the yoga breathing exercises you will expand your breath and increase the amount of energy in your body. Breathing is such an important part of yoga, without the focus on your breathing yoga is nothing more than just stretching exercises.

Breathing is a natural response and is part of our nervous system, but we can control our breathing in the same way we control movement such as your golf swing and yoga exercises. Your breath can also be controlled.

There are three basics characteristics in breathing – the inhaling, the exhaling and the withholding of breath. Withholding your breath is an important part of expanding your breathing and stimulating your nervous system. In yoga you will only focus on the inhaling and exhaling of your breathing.

The yoga exercises designed to work on your upper body flexibility will help you build strength by uses your body's weight against gravity for resistance. They will also incorporate the use of strength tubing and weights to stabilize your core.

Your posture is another area yoga exercises can enhance. There are several different factors attributed to poor posture, aging, an inactive lifestyle, and ineffective methods, which can cause an imbalance in the body. Poor posture is sweeping the country in adults and children and is directly linked to billions of dollars spent every year on back pain related healthcare.

Here is a way for you to evaluate your posture.

Stand facing a mirror and let your body to fall into its natural stance. Look at the line of your shoulders and upper back. Is your upper back rounded and your shoulders turned slightly inward? If so, you need to work on your posture.

Your natural posture (the way you sit or stand when no one is looking) is your base you will use to build your dynamic posture. Just as in a house, the foundation has to be strong enough to handle the structure of the house. Your natural posture is your foundation in this case. You will want to start with the strengthening of your core and then work your way up to the posture exercises. Yoga is a lot like working a jigsaw puzzle; each piece has its own place. On its own it is nothing, but when added to its proper place it helps complete the whole picture. With yoga, you cannot put your cart before the horse, as my grandmother used to say.

Now we are going to look at using weights to improve your golf game. You will be using weights as resistance training, which has been designed just for golf. The golf specific weight program uses moderate weights with medium repetitions, and in a 30 to 45 minute time frame. This golf specific program was created to improve your strength and endurance for golf swings, etc. It is not designed to build muscle.

Weak muscles are tight muscles and resistance training will increase the blood flow, which will work through a range of motion to maintain flexibility and strengthening the tendons and ligament to protect and support the joints of your body. Coupled with stretching exercises the training will improve your flexibility.*

Chapter 6 – Senior Golfers need Good Nutrition

The game of golf requires surges of energy for the high-power action of the game followed by lengthy periods of standing, walking, and possibly even sitting in a cart. The long periods of physical and mental alertness requires the body and the brain to be operating at a peak capacity. The right foods and liquids will fuel the body and the brain to their optimum performance level.

You will want to balance your blood sugar and keep it balanced with the foods you eat. Your brain consumes the most blood sugar than any other organ in your body. If your blood sugars supply is low, you will become sluggish, you will experience concentration, plus slow and distorted communication with the body. The end results will be a poor golf game.

Most of the time poor shots such as bogies or wayward shots made late in the round could be caused by low-energy and dehydration. Golf is a tough enough game for you to find yourself running out of energy before the end of the game. Here are some suggestions to keep you at the top of your game towards the end of the round.

For breakfast the day of your golf match, you will need to eat 45 minutes to 1 hour before you play. Have a balanced meal consisting of 35 – 45% carbohydrates, 25 –

30% protein, and 20 – 30% fats. The follow is a list of some foods to choose from. It will give you an idea of the type of food you need to eat.

- Complex carbohydrates – fresh vegetables and fruits, not fruit juices and a small amount of whole grains.
- Protein/Fats – fish, fowl, fresh lean meats, or boiled eggs, hard or soft.
- Dairy products - Only small amounts of dairy products should be consumed. Dairy products can be difficult for most people to digest. You might try goat dairy products such as yogurt. Use butter. No margarine.
- Protein/ Carbohydrate shakes.
- Vitamins – 2 Daily vitamins and Omega 3's.

Eat 4 to 5 small meals or snacks every day. Fresh fruit, such as an apple along with peanut butter or raw nuts are a good choice. Peanut butter and celery sticks are another good choice. You don't want sugary or fried foods. Low sugar protein bars can be good especially the ones made with nuts and seeds. Sugar substitutes are not good either.

Use these ideas when preparing the snacks you will take with you on game day to help keep your blood sugar in balance. You will want to make a habit of preparing your snacks the night before and have them already in your bag. It doesn't work well if you try to prepare them the morning of game day. It is important for you to keep your brain and body fueled so you can last all day.

You will want to take along plenty of spring water. You will want to stay hydrated the whole day. Use the rule of thumb and drink 8 – 8oz. Glasses of spring water. Tap water has too much chlorine and toxic metals which has been added to the water. You will want to drink water every other hole, more if it is hot. Do not drink caffeine, alcohol, fruit drinks or sodas.

Last but not least, you will need to get plenty of sleep the night before. If you go to bed around 10 or 10:30 so as to wake up on your own with out the assistance of an alarm clock, you will have a better chance of a good performance.

Chapter 7 – Shopping for Lessons

If you are new to the game of golf or even if you are a seasoned golfer, there will come a time when you might need a lesson. Whether it is to learn the game from the beginning or to find out how to correct a particular problem you are having with your game it is important for you to find the right type of golf lessons. Not choosing the right type of golf lesson for you're style of play and level of learning you may never learn what you need to know.

Before you set out on your venture, you will want to decide how much you want to pay for these lessons. Next you will need to decide where you game needs improvement before you start looking. Another factor you will want to consider is how you want to be instructed. Would you like to learn in a group setting or one-on-one with an instructor? Maybe you would rather watch an instructional DVD. No matter which one you choose there will be positive and negative aspects to each of them.

First let's consider private one-on-one instruction. This method of instruction is usually the most expensive. The instructors are usually experienced and have high-end facilities at their disposal. This is a good reason for deciding on the amount you will be spending for these instructions. If private instruction is likely to be too costly, you can mark them off your list. However, if private instruction is your preference and cost is not an issue, you will want to meet with some of the professionals giving the lessons to interview them for you to determine the quality of their knowledge and to get an idea of their teaching style.

If you are considering a golf school for group instruction, ask the number of students per instructor. As in any school the fewer number of students per teacher, the most closely the teacher can work with the students. Golf schools work best for beginning golfers and intermediate golfers who have not had any type of instruction before. In the school you will receive an overview of the full swing, and probably some insight to the game.

If you are a beginner, some of the instructional videos on the market would be a smart choice to make. The video will help you understand the basic of the swing mechanics and the regularity. If you are an intermediate or an experienced amateur golfer, watching a video may not be the answer to your needs. If you are an advanced player, looking for tips on specific aspects of their game, you might better off spending the money on one or two private lessons. However, for the beginners the videos would be a practical introduction or instruction method for you to learn from home. If you need someone to reassure you are following the instructions correctly, you may want to consider a weekend golf school instead.

In considering a golf school, you will have your own requirements differing from those of others looking for the same instruction. Some will be considering the quality of the teaching skills of the instructor, while others will be more concerned with the cost of the school, and others will want to delve into the social scene at the school. The ultimate results will be you are all going to golf school to learn to play golf. When you are looking into a golf school, you will choose on based on your own person preferences.

As you are searching for a golf school, it is imperative to check into its teaching principles. It will be important to know if the school accepts students of all ages and abilities. For beginners it is very helpful for them to have the opportunity to watch more experienced players. You may even want to look for a school specifically for your age group. Some schools will be specific about the age group of the students allowed to enroll.

You will want to inquire about the student to instructor ratio. One-on-one instruction can be extremely costly, but it is necessary for the student to instructor ratio be low enough to allow student to receive sufficient training in a group setting. With large groups, instructor will end up spending too much of your time managing the group.

Many school offer training aids and gadgets to help the student imitate the perfect swing as well as to scrutinize their own efforts. Even though these gadgets and training aids are very exciting, and they serve their purpose in teaching the novice, it does not compare to quality instruction from a professional instructor who knows the game well and has a deep love for the game.

Before deciding on a golf school, do not be afraid of asking pertinent question regarding the instructor you will be working with. You will want to ask about the instructor's qualifications, the instructor's experience and PGA status. It is best to learn from someone who know how to play and plays very well. Classroom theory is useful, but putting the theory into practice is where you will learn the most.

Cost may be a factor in choosing your golf school. If it is, the cheapest is not usually your best choice. Look instead for the value for your dollar there is a difference. If need be you could take for lessons for your money, and get quality instruction. Rather than spending the same amount of money, attending faithfully and receive mediocre instruction.

As with learning any new skill, you must be willing to practice to improve. It won't matter how good the instructor or the school is if you do not take the time to practice. People will learn more by actual doing than they will from listening to someone talk about it. Tips and pointers are helpful, but putting it into action on the green is where it should all fall into place.

Chapter 8 – Tips on Warm-ups

Whether you are playing in a tournament or not, you need to allow yourself plenty of time to warm-up before you start your round. A good warm-up gets you off to a great start for the rest of the day. You probably have seen athletes such as football player, baseball players, etc. warming up before every game. Golfers are not any different. Professional golfers have done their warm-up and ready to start the round with a great opening swing by the time they are standing at the tee.

Many amateur golfers have a tendency to warm-up when they leave their car in the parking lot to run into the golf shop to get signed up. For the rest of the day they will feel rushed and frazzled. Their first 5 shots will be bad which will ultimately ruin the rest of the round.

It is best to get to the course early, at least one hour before tee time. You can take care of business at the golf shop, change shoes, etc without being rushed and in a hurry. This schedule will allow you plenty of time to warm-up at a leisurely pace.

You will want to start your warm-up by putting some shots. This will give you an idea of the speed on the green. Use a tee or a coin as your target when doing these putting shots. Putt to your target from twenty feet away and also from thirty and forty. Then you will want to do some short putts from three feet away and work up to 10 feet away. Do not putt to the hole. After putting to such a small target, the hole will look huge which will be good for your confidence. Next putt from six inches away from your target placing the target up hill from where you are putting.

Then you will want to hit some chip shots around the green. This will help you determine the firmness of the green. A ball will roll more on a firm green than it will on a soft green. The ball will also react differently on different types of rough. This will help you read the green. It will help you make choices during the round such as where to make the ball land on the putting green, and the best greenside shots to make.

After warm-up with your putting shots, you will want to do some stretching exercise to warm up for the full swing. The stretching will limber you and loosen your muscles enough to give them a broader range of movement. They will also help you avoid injuries and chronic joint pain. Warm-up with stretching exercises for about fifteen minutes.

Next you will go to the practice tee to begin your full swing warm-up. You will want to start with short wedge shots, using a short tee for all your shots on the range. You want to decisively connect with the ball, which will help you with your confidence. Using smooth and unhurried movements, make your wedge shots.

Once you have hit several wedge shots, continue on with your short irons progressing up to the long irons and woods. Using a rhythmic swing with absolute balance control on all your practice swings, make your last few using the club you will be using to tee off with. This is usually a 3- or 5-wood.

Time your warm-up so when you are finished you can walk to the first tee and arrive for your group's assigned time. It is best not to have long to stand around after warming up. If you are a little early or someone is running late, stand out of the way where you can make some swings and stretch, you want to stay loose.

Taking the time to do a good warm-up will give you a good start for your round. You will be able to perform at your highest level and improve your scores.

Chapter 9 – How About That Swing!

It is important to develop a pre-shot routine. A pre-shot routine will give you the opportunity to look closely at your situation. Get behind the ball to start your pre-shot routine. This will allow the best advantage. You will be able to line the ball with the target use your golf club to line up the two together. Once you have determined your aim so your ball will move in the direction of the target when you hit it. Etch the path of the ball and the target in your mind you will be ready to take your shot.

Next you will want to line up your body with the ball, making sure to check your shoulders, hips, thighs and feet. You should be parallel and left of the target. Keeping your eye on the ball you can take your best shot. As long as it on the line to your target, it won't matter so much if you don't hit the ball perfectly.

With practice and experience all of this will become a habit. Since it is necessary for you to have a target to aim for, it is important to work on this pre-shot routine till it becomes old hand.

All great golfers have a good golf set-up position. If you are determined to improve your score, focus on the basics, which are successful. Many people overlook one of the most important basics, the set-up position. Your swing is developed from your set-up position.

A good golf set-up position ensures the proper posture and placement of the feet, which will allow you to be able to keep your balance during your swing. All of the really great golfers are balance from the time they first focus on the ball to the end of their swing. Staying balance will ensure you are able to hit the ball squarely in the middle of the clubface. The key to being consistent in hitting the ball with the correct spot on the club is balance. With a good set-up you will remain balance all through your swing.

With a good set-up position you can control the direction your shot with power. The ball position and body alignment are key elements in the pre-swing; it creates conditions enabling you to take control. When you first focus on the ball, your body alignment will have complete control of the path and the angle you swing your club. Basically your set-up affects all aspects of your swing.

If you want to be a great player, a good set-up position will put in a position where you are at an advantage. A good set-up will allow you to connect with the ball and achieve a good impact position. When you set-up, make sure you set-up with good impact in mind.

Most people who have played the game of golf will tell you it is one of the most difficult games to play and play well. They love or at least enjoy playing the game, but will also tell you not many people every master the game. Even Tiger has his off days.

This could be the reason there are so many people trying to sell you something to improve your skill and to help you score. The swing aids are just one of them. The swing aids for the most part do work, and they will help you improve your game. However, do we have to be able to swing like the Pros on the PGA tour to enjoy playing the game? Probably not, but it sure helps.

The reality is the basics we have heard numerous of times, such as “don’t lift your head”, “keep your arms straight”, and “turn your hips”. These tips all have one thing in common which is to make your golf club come through the down swing, and hit the ball with the club face in just the right spot, so the ball will go right where you want it. Straight down the green.

Now all those tips are important to follow for you to achieve that “perfect swing”, but you don’t have to have the “perfect swing” to play a decent round of golf. Of course you would still like to be able to accomplish that “perfect swing”. So let’s talk about some important points to help you bring your club square on the ball when you hit it, so the ball will go straight.

When all else fails, it is always best to go back to the basics. Do your best to keep your front arm as straight as possible. This will ensure your club will hit the ball for it to go straight. Keep your head down or better yet, keep your eye on the ball. You still want to keep your chin elevated enough for your shoulders to rotate giving your swing more power. Don’t stoop over the ball. Your back needs to be straight and bend at the hips. While keeping your back straight and chin up lean forward a little bit. Your knees need to be slightly bent. This goes for any and every shot you make. Don’t bend them too much, just enough to be noticed. The key point in your swing is following through your swing with you hips. Your back hip will come forward and your front hip will go back because the buckle of your belt should be pointing in the direction of your target.

To look more closely at the golf swing, we should note there are three parts to a golf swing. First there is the back swing, followed by the downward swing and lastly impacting the ball while following through.

The back swing is very important to the golf swing as a whole. Reason being if you start badly you will end badly. In other words, if the back swing is not performed correctly, the rest of the swing is useless. For the back swing focus should be on the body rotation, the arm position and the club.

The downward swing starts with the legs and hips. It does not start with the arms even though the arms do the actual swing of the club. During the downward swing there should be a transfer of weight from the back to the front using your knees, your thighs, and your hips in a forward movement.

As the club impacts the ball, your weight should be on your outside forward heel and the inside of your rear foot.

The golf swing is an unnatural movement the body will violently resist. So for all three portions of the golf swing to be performed correctly is impossible without specific golf exercises to ready and strengthen the muscles needed to do the golf swing. For this reason golfers find it so difficult to get right. The swing itself many look simple and easy to do, but in reality is one of the hardest things to master.

Good rhythm and balance is important to every swing because it is the key to consistency in your swing. If you rush your swing, your balance will be off and result in poor ball flight. Golfers who are outstanding in hitting the ball are seldom off balance when they strike the ball and their rhythm bonds their positions and movements. Their swings may appear to be effortless, but are actually swinging effortlessly and hitting solid. To correctly arrange your body motion to arrive at the striking point with a position of control and power you must have great rhythm. In turn to be more consistent when hitting your ball, your body must be balanced. Good rhythm and balance are connected. You need both to be a great golfer.

Here is a drill to help you improve your balance and rhythm. In the ground line up 5 tees about 4 inches apart. Then stand just inside the closest tee. Swing a 7-iron back and forward through with a continuous motion. Keep moving forward clipping each tee out of the ground. Repeat three more times. This will allow you to find a swing pace which will help you maintain your balance and still generate speed of the club.

Memorize your balance points while doing this drill. You can close your eyes and feel your balance as you step up to the ball, then make the back swing and stop with the club in the air, feel your balance on your back foot. Finish the swing and hold, feel your weight on your front foot and tap your back toe.

One of the best drills is to practice your swing in slow motion. Line up 10 teed balls and make your full swing in slow motion. Your balls will only travel about 10 –15 yards, but this only about 10 percent of your normal swing speed. With every set of 10 balls increase your speed by 10-percent. By the time you reach 80-percent you will have found your best balance and rhythm speed. You might be surprised to find you are hitting the ball solid and the distance your ball has traveled.

Chapter 10 – Proper grips and pressure

When holding the handle of your club, your hands must work together as one. This will enable you to strike the ball with power. There are three different grips you can use when holding the handle of the club. Choose the one best for you.

After you have chosen the type of grip you want to use, you will need to use the right amount of pressure on your grip. If you grip the club too tight it can cause weak shots, which will slice. A lighter grip will work better because it will increase the wrist alignment, which is a crucial source of the power in your swing. The lighter pressure on the grip will also add to the amount of your clubface rotary motion, which will improve your ability of squaring the club when you hit the ball.

The amount of pressure you should be using would be about a 5 on a scale between 1 and 10. Using a light grip pressure allows you to swing the club with power and control. So when you first step up and focus on the ball, feel relaxed and free of any tensions in your arms or your hands. The right amount of pressure coupled with the correct placement of your hands on the club handle, will give you the opportunity to create longer, straighter shots.

Proper placement of your hands on the golf club will allow you to control the position of the face of the club when it hits the ball. In the process of your swing, your body will use the turn to create power. You want your body and your club to work together.

A basically sound grip will help your body create power while at the same time feeling the turn. Gripping the club too much in your palm will cut down on your wrist movement, which is another source of power. By holding the club more with your fingers it will increase the amount of your wrist rotation. The end results will be more feel and longer tee shots.

Having a weak lead-hand (left hand for right handed players) grip with the club handle in the palm instead of the fingers produces a slice shot with no power.

The trailing hand is usually your dominant hand. This hand must be positioned so as to deliver a forceful strike when your club hits the ball without overriding your lead-hand. For this reason your hands must work together as one. The proper placement of your hands is crucial for consistency when hitting your ball.

Chapter 11 – Improve Your Putting

Reading the greens will make it easier for you during the game because you will know how your ball will react to the contours of the green. You may adjust your shots to fit the greens.

To read the greens you will need to squat down for you to get a better view of the contours. With your ball in front of you a ways, squat down so you will be able to see the slopes of the green.

Look closely at your putt from the side, if there is a low side, look at your putt from the low side. It will give you another view, which will enable you to judge the distance and gauge the speed of the ball.

Cross to the opposite side of the flagpole from your putt because this will give you a view from yet another angle. If players are waiting on you to make your shot, do not hold them up.

Watch the putts of the other players. If one of the players has a putt a lot like yours, especially watch as he or she putts the ball toward the hole.

It never hurts to ask for help unless you are playing for money or defending your ego. Your teammates or partner will be happy to give you advice. Pros often ask advice of their caddies. It never hurts to have a second pair of eyes watching.

If you have already made your putt, pay attention to the details. Watch your ball as it moves; observe how it is moving, and how it reacts to the green. Try to learn from your mistakes. Sometimes our mistakes are our best teacher.

Always practice a few putts on the practice green. This will give you an idea of the playing greens. You will want to note the speed of the greens so you can adjust your shots accordingly.

Does your putting ability seem to leave your body when you are standing behind your ball on the green and the pressure is on? Let's see what you are missing when you are in a putting situation. Make sure the grip is in your palm and not your fingers. Golfers using their fingers will tend to use their wrist to putt the ball. When you putt this way you won't have control of your distance. If your putts end up way short of the hole, this could be the problem. If the wrists get involved with your putt shot it will add a little lift to your putter. This will use up some of the distance your ball will go.

Make sure your arms are straight and make your wrists stay out of the shot. You will then be able to put the correct amount of lift to your putter and the ball will roll the distance you need it to go. You should be able to cut your putts per hole down to two putts, assuming the ball goes in the direction you intended. Watch your score drop.

If you are having trouble making distance on your drives, maybe your body is not in alignment when hitting the ball. If you are not in the proper position you will be making a considerable amount of adjustments during your swing. First, position the ball forward, opposite your left heel. Most of your weight (about 60%) should be on your right foot with your shoulders squared up. If your body and your ball are lined up in the proper position, you will end up pop the ball in the air. This causes a loss of power. Keep your spine angle and you will see your drives level out with your ball reaching greater distances.

If you miss a breaking putt, your stroke was probably fine, but your speed was probably wrong. Missing a straight putt you know your stroke was a bad one. For this reason you need to only focus on the stroke of your straight putt. Usually the putts we expect to make are the ones 4 to 6 feet from the hole, so with practice you can improve your putt from these distances.

Group together about 10 balls, but line up one as a straight putt of about 4 feet. As you go to make your first putt, make sure the head of the putter is going straight back and then straight through to hit the ball. Your putter face should be square to your target line all the time. This is one of the easiest mistakes to make and the most common among golfers having trouble with their putts. Correcting the problem takes a lot of work and attention, but if you have determination, the pay off is huge.

Set a goal for the number of putts made consecutively. When you have reached that goal; add to the number of putts until you are up to 50. Start over again at one putt each time you miss a putt.

This practice will help you learn how to putt under pressure because as you are practicing and you reach 45, 46, 47, and 48, you don't want to start all over again, so it will important for you to make the next putt.

Another benefit to this method of practice is it will increase you confidence level and your fear of these types of putts will lessen.

If it is difficult to go to the course, you can always practice anywhere there is carpet on the floor.

Now you will want to improve on your putting practice drills. You will be working on gauging your speed and working on your control of distance. This will be your focus for this practice drill. Use a ball marker, tee or a coin as your target. You don't want to use a hole because you don't want to see your ball missing the hole. From about 6 feet away, roll your ball toward the target. Focus on pinpointing the ball on the putter face. Place markers at varying distance, and practice putting the balls to each of these distances.

You will want to practice long putts, hit from one side of the green to the other. Fortunately 70-foot putts are not a common occurrence. Most of the putts you should be practicing are about 6-feet from the target, preferably 4-foot putts. You will need to practice putting on a flat part of the practice green. When ending your practice session, make short putts. Don't quit on a miss. Make yourself to make five or six putts in a row to end the practice session.

Confidence is a huge part of putting. Visualization helps your confidence. Learn to visualize to help you stay positive. If need be, put down a chalk line for you to practice keeping your putter on the line. There are putting aids you can purchase to assist you with the centering the stroke.

Chapter 12 – Playing in the Sand Box

To be successful in the sand you will need to learn the correct set-up, the proper technique, and point of entry. When playing short sand shots, you should use a sand wedge. The lift of the sand wedges vary from 55 to 58 degrees. They will have an 8 to 12 degree bounce. Visualize three lines in the sand, each with a different purpose. The target line goes from the target to the ball and beyond. The second line will be almost parallel to the target line, but it is the angle of your feet and toes. The third line will be

perpendicular to the target line starting from the ball. This line will show where the ball is positioned, which should be in line with your left heel for right-handed golfers.

Now you have the correct set-up distributing your weight equally on each foot. The clubface should be open, but only a little. This will give the ball a lift and permits the back of the club bottom to bounce off the sand.

Your back swing needs to be straight or just a little outside the target line. There should be a breaking of the hands immediately as you start your swing. This will produce a vertical swing, which will push the club into the sand behind the ball about two inches or so. This is your point of entry. You are actually trying to avoid connecting with the ball and taking as little sand as possible with it. You want the sand to lift the ball from the bunker. There should be a cupping of the wrist as you connect with the sand. Cupping is to bring the back of your left hand in the direction of your wrist creating wrinkles. The technique is essential to making quality sand shots. This movement will not allow the club to close and the ball to lift in the air with backspin. Now you have the basic principles needed to make a sand shot.

When your ball ends up in the sand, you will not get to choose perfect conditions. The sand may be wet, maybe most of the sand is gone from the bunker and you only have a thin layer of sand, or maybe your ball has landed on the slope of the bunker. When faced in one of these situations, you will need to adjust the sand shot procedure. When playing in wet sand or a very thin layer of sand, the club does not need to be slightly open; it can be square with the ball. You may want to consider making a shorter back swing. Since you want to avoid the bounce of the club off the sand, you do not want the clubface open.

If your ball is on a downhill or uphill slope, your set-up is different just a little. Your feet should be just a few degrees different from the target line. You will want to stand 15 to 25 degrees open from the target line rather than the 10 to 15 degrees open for a level sand shot. You will still want the club to be slightly open for this shot.

The ball should be lined up just off the left heel for your uphill shots. For the forward motion you should swing your club upward. Make your upward swing in the direction favorable to the slope.

If you are on a downhill slope, your stand should be the same number of degrees open as in the uphill. The ball should be in the middle of both of your heels. Place the majority of your weight on your left foot. (About 60 to 70%) Cock your wrist immediately on the back swing. This will give you a vertical motion, which will accommodate the downward slope.

Apply these techniques for the various sand conditions and slopes will increase the consistency in your sand shots and help your scores.

For the sand shots you will need to have a consistent point of entry. You want your club entering the sand at the same spot every time. The correct point of entry is two inches behind the ball, so you will want to practice using this drill.

Draw a line in the sand about six feet long. Then take your club and make small indentations in the sand for the imaginary balls about two inches in front of the line.

Make them about 6 inches apart. Then do the correct set-up and start taking swings. Your goal is to make the club enter the sand on the line. Practicing this way you can achieve consistency with your point of entry for the sand shots.

Chapter 13 – The Mental Game

The mental portion of the golf game is an important part. Your mind can defeat all the good training with one thought. If you get mad at yourself over your performance it is non-productive and will eat away at your confidence. The next time you catch yourself getting mad or losing your focus remind yourself you did the best you could and let it go.

Just remember when you tell yourself something it is like programming a computer. It remembers. So make it all positive and productive. You don't want to work against yourself, so choose what you think carefully and make it positive thoughts.

Negative thoughts are a bad habit, but it can be changed. When you start to think a negative thought, tell yourself "stop!" and don't continue the thought. Instead change it to a positive thought.

Another aspect of the mental game of golf is over-analyzing. If you are the type of player who has a difficulty with the amount of time you have to get ready for your shot. The good thing is you don't have to make your shot until you are ready to make it. The bad thing is with too much time you will think too much. When you start over-analyzing every shot and every putt, you will clog the brain. The brain then sends poor signals to the body. Your mind is designed to process only a certain amount of information before it goes into over-load. The best avenue to take is to relax and let your imagination take care of the variables of the shot.

A quiet, non-analytical mind is the type of mind to get into the flow and become engrossed in the execution of the shot. Don't let past holes get in the way of your concentration on this shot. Focus totally on the shot at hand.

To quiet your mind focus your attention on your breathing while you are preparing for a shot. Let all other thoughts pass and re-focus on your breathing. Try to keep your thoughts about your swing to only one thought such as the rhythm of the swing. If you are a visual player, see the target and let your body hit the shot. Save the analysis for practice drills.

Chapter 14 – Golf Equipment

Meet the Irons

Irons are aptly named because of their metal heads. Of course, woods are now made with metal, but it was changed only recently. The features of the irons are the narrow club head and the grooved flat sides or faces. Experienced player might choose the blade style of iron or the muscle back. Where as a beginner and most recreational players will choose the cavity back style. The difference between the two is the back of the club. The cavity back looks hollow out where as the blade back will have a full back.

The effect created by the two different styles is called the perimeter weighting, which is helpful to inexperienced players.

A typical set of irons start with a 3-iron and go up to the pitching wedge, which will total 8 clubs. The clubs are identified by the number (or PW) located on the sole of each club.

Each club has a greater loft and slightly shorter than the previous one. The difference in the number of yards in a shot is about 10-15 yards. The 3-iron will produce a longer shot by about 10-15 yards than the 4-iron. Also the greater the loft of the club the shots they produce will have a steeper trajectory.

The 1-iron and the 2-iron are obtained through a separate purchase. As a beginner you will not have a use for these irons. Because of the longer shaft and little loft, they can be difficult clubs for the recreational player to master. Some experts will even tell beginners and recreational players not to use the 3- or 4-iron. They recommend utility clubs or fairway woods as replacements.

Irons are categorized as long irons, midirons, and short irons. The long irons are numbered from 1 to 4-iron, the mid-iron from 5 to 7 and the short irons the 8 and the 9-irons and the pitching wedge.

For most amateurs the short irons are easier to hit than the midirons. The reason for this is the loft increases with the shorter shaft. The shorter shaft club is easier to control during the swing.

Learning your distances. You will want to know how many yards you can hit with each club. There is no right or wrong distance for a club, there is only your distance. Every person is different; so don't expect to do the same exact number of yards with a club just because someone else does.

Irons are more appropriate most of the time to play off a tee. If you prefer you can use a tee with every iron shot so you will have better control over the shot. Most of your iron shots are from the fairway. Irons are designed with a leading edge because of the divots shots they make from the fairway. When you take a shot with an iron, you will dig up a chunk of turf; don't worry about it; it is expected. This happens because the ball is to be struck on the downward swing.

Knowing which iron to use in the right situation will come with knowing the distance you can make with which club.

Precept ECS – Irons Designed for Senior Golfers

Senior golfers may not create the backspin or even swing the club as fast, but they still expect the best performance they can get out of their equipment. The Precept created the new ECS Senior Irons with the senior's specific needs in mind. This set of irons is a perimeter-weighted set designed to improve your game and offer forgiveness and more feel with every shot.

At Precept they have always tried to engineer golf products to help all golfers improve their game. This is what they have done for the senior golfers. These irons are designed to help senior golfers get more from their miss hits. Each of the irons features a longer heel to toe length to disperse the weight of the club head. This feature adds to the sweet spot. In an effort to aid the seniors in getting the ball in the air there is tungsten placed in the trailing edge of the club. This added weight supplies them with a greater ball by lowering the center of gravity. An elastomer compound insert is located behind the face to cut down on the vibration when it strikes the ball. Lastly they have fitted the club with a 60-gram A-flex graphite shaft. This shaft is designed just for senior golfer's club head speed. The ECS Senior Irons are available in the standard 3-PW set (stands for 3-iron to pitching wedge) or a hybrid set which comes with a ¾ ECU Utility Wood with a 25 degree loft, a 5/6 ECU Utility Wood with a 30 degree loft, and 7-SW. All of these pieces together make this iron set the best set a senior to own who is looking to improving their game.

Getting to Know Woods

When looking into a typical golfer's golf bag, you will find a driver and one or two fairway woods. The most popular is the 3-wood and/or a 5-wood. It is recommended for women and seniors to add a 7-wood or 9-wood because it might be beneficial to them. The 4-wood is another fairly popular wood. Some golfers even carry an 11-wood.

The club head of a wood are created to be deep. They are made of metal usually steel or a titanium alloy. They are called woods because they were originally made from wood. Metals became the material of choice in the 1980s.

The driver, also known as the 1-wood, will be one of the most difficult clubs to learn to master, especially for the beginners. It will be the longest club in the bag with a typical length of 45 inches, which makes it difficult to control the swing.

The driver club heads are made from the same metal as the woods and the fairway woods. Steel is not as costly, but the titanium adds a boost because it is a lighter metal

The fairway woods, like irons, in they progress in loft and length the same as the irons. The fairway wood's club head is smaller than the drivers. Because they are shorter than the driver, they are easier to control than the driver. For that reason beginners will often time use the fairway woods instead of the driver to tee off.

Even though driver can be hit from the fairway, it is a shot most amateurs will ever make. The fairway woods are a good replacement to the driver because of their smaller heads and increased lofts will help get the ball into the air. Beginners might consider carrying extra woods such as the 5-, 7- and 9-wood, in place of some of the longer irons. Fairway woods work best for beginners and recreational players than the long irons.

Drivers are intended to hit the ball from the upswing. The fairway woods are intended to hit the ball at the bottom of the swing. You will want to place the ball forward in the stance when using a wood.

It is the same with the woods as with the irons, there is not right or wrong distance. There is only your distance. You will want to learn the distance you make with each club. It will give you a better idea of the club to use when you are in certain situations.

Which Putter is Best For You?

There are a wide variety of putters on the market, but they all come in the same three lengths. There is the conventional, belly and long putters. To find the length best for you, get out on a putting green and see which one is comfortable for you and gives you the best results while trying it out.

The Conventional Putter

It is the consensus of most the golf instructors, if you can use a conventional putter, then you should use a conventional putter.

The ideal putting posture is to take your stance and lean forward so that your eyes are directly over the putting line. Let your arms hang down loose then bring your palms together. There you have it – your ideal putting posture.

Of course you will not be able to use this posture unless your putter length is the shortest one, which is the conventional.

The conventional putter requires nerves of steel with very little wrist action. So some pros and amateurs who cannot seem to keep the jitters down or have excess wrist action will go with the belly or long putter.

The Belly Putter

With the belly putter there is a third point of contact, which is the abdomen along with each hand. This provides stability and balance when you make your stroke. Because the putter is has your body to steady it and the wrist action is easier to control are the advantages to this length of putter. Since the belly putters usually have a thicker grip your feel of the shot will be reduced. Your control of the distance is a little more difficult.

The Long Putter

The long putter total eliminates the wrist action and makes it look like a true pendulum swing. Golfers are able to stand upright for those who suffer from weak or aching backs, they are getting a break. Because the long putter is even longer than the belly putter, controlling your distance is even more difficult.

Buying a New Shaft

The day will come when you end up with a broken shaft. Now you have two choices, take it to the nearest club maker and have it repaired or you could just replace the shaft yourself. In either case, you will have to know how to choose a shaft.

You will have steel or graphite shaft to choose from. Another choice you will have to make is the shaft flex and the bend point required. You'll need to decide the correct torque rating for the shaft, and then you will have to decide on the length the club will be when completed.

The original shaft from the broken club would have been made out of steel or graphite. If you decide you want to change the shaft material from the original, there are some differences in the metals you will need to know.

The steel shafts will weight more than the graphite. Their torque ratings will be lower. The steel is more durable and the surface will not have any paint to get scratched. The end results when the club and shaft are assembled together, is the club will be heavier.

The graphite shafts are much lighter than the steel. They have an extensive choose of torque ratings.

The simplest way is to replace the original shaft with a shaft exactly like it. You may want to experiment a little. Maybe for some reason you want more flexibility or strength in your replacement shaft.

The golf industry does not have a standard for the flex rating or the bend point for the shaft. So, for one manufacturer their regular flex will be different from another manufacturer. In essence when playing with two different shafts from two different manufacturers even with the same flex rating will feel and play different. The flex of the shaft will determine the swing speed ratings. The swing speed ratings of a shaft will differ because of the manufacturer's flex ratings differ. The bend point determines the ball's trajectory, so you will want to decide on the type of ball flight you expect.

The flex of the shaft refers the shafts ability to bend with the force applied to it by the golf swing. The force comes from the type of swing you have whether it be fast or slow, smooth or jerky.

This most commonly used rating for shaft flex is extra stiff, stiff, regular, senior and ladies. They can be identified by the letters X, S, R, A, and L. Without the right flex for your swing, your clubface will be out of line when it connects with the ball causing your shots to veer off target.

The shaft flex will have an effect on the accuracy, the trajectory, and the distance of your shot. As the shaft flexes during the swing, the position of the club head changes. The face of the club must be perfect straight when it connects with the ball for you to get what you want from the shot. If the flex is wrong for your type of swing there is less of a chance you will make a good connection with the ball. The clubface will not be in a perfectly straight position.

The amount of flex you have in your shaft is totally under your control. You can choose to get a stiffer shaft or a softer one depending on your needs. For you to be able to tell the type of flex you need, you will want to check the distance you can hit your driver. If you can hit the ball with your driver and it goes 250 yards or more, you might want to go with a stiff flex. For 230-250 yards you will want to go with the regular flex. For 200-230 yards you will want a Senior, and for less than 200 yards the Ladies. As a rule only the biggest of the big hitters is going to need Extra Stiff. For most of us, Extra Stiff isn't even in the running. You will probably prefer a softer flex if you have a very smooth swing, even if you swing really fast. If you swing gets jerky at the top, you will prefer a stiffer shaft. Also you might want a stiffer flex, if your drives move to the left. If it moves to the right, you will want a softer flex in your shaft.

If your flex is too stiff, your ball will fly lower and a shorter distance for any amount of loft in your club. Your ball will also have a tendency to go to the right because the clubface is more likely to be open when it connects with the ball. Your shot may not feel solid when you do make the connection on the center of the clubface.

If your shaft isn't stiff enough, the ball might go into the air much higher with any loft. The ball will also have a tendency to move to the left. Your shots will tend to feel really solid when they aren't.

The recommended method of choosing the proper flex is to see a golf professional for a club fitting. The pro will be able to take a lot of measurements as well as watch your swing so your swing speed can be measured. The pro will also watch your ball flight so the best flex for you can be determined. You can have a club fitting at many of the pro shops, almost all of the golf schools, and from professional instructors.

You could go to a demo day where you will be able to hit many clubs with a different shaft. When you find a club, which seems to work well for you, you will want to note everything you can about it so you can get the same type of shaft and flex for your clubs.

Drivers and Full Swing

Every golfer wants to know how to improve the golf swing to achieve more power. Most golfers will do what ever it takes to obtain increases power in their drives. Your swing power comes from the results of three factors, golf strength, swing mechanics and golf equipment. You may not be surprised to see swing mechanics on the list, but might be a little surprised at golf strength.

Talking about golf equipment, it does make a difference in the length of your drive. You have all seen the advertisements of the new driver created to add 20 yards to your drive. You may have even picked up one of those new drivers. It will give you the extra 20 yards, whether that extra 20 yards goes to the right, the left or down the middle of the fairway will depend on the swing mechanics and the golf strength.

Golf strength is described as how well your body is trained to swing a golf club with greatest amount of power. Golf strength probably the one key factor needed by all golfers because it is the least understood.

Even though equipment advances have done their part in adding yards to your drive, without better swing mechanics and with the much needed golf strength, the new equipment will not help your game.

All golfers know the importance of the mechanics of the golf swing when it comes to driving the ball. Proficiency in swing mechanics is critical. The improper swing can result in a slice or snap hook. The drives could be too short, too low, too high, etc. when you are making bad swings.

It is important for a golfer to practice on the mechanics of his swing, every week, to improve his or her game. Tour players have swing coaches work with them on a regular

basis, the swing mechanics are that important. The golf swing is such a complex movement; it requires endless work to keep it effective.

The golf swing mechanics need varying levels of flexibility, balance, stability, strength, endurance, and power to be able to execute it effectively. Without these the results will be a less than your best swing possible.

Your body is the foundation of the swing. You need a good sturdy foundation for the house or building to stand on or it will crumble. In other words you can work on your swing all you want, but without the golf strength the body needs to support the swing, you are just wasting your time. You must fix the body before you can fix the mechanics of the swing.

Even with your golf equipment. It will only perform as the swing. Without the body, you don't have swing mechanics, without swing mechanics, the equipment will not improve your game. You can see how all of these are linked together. One cannot work without the other.

If you are faithfully practicing and there seems to be no improvement, you might want to look at taking a lesson or two. There is golf instruction available you just need to take advantage of the opportunity. The lack of proper training can result in the increase and establishing incorrect swing mechanics. No good results will come of this. The results will be slices, hooks, hitting it fat on the course, etc. All these types of swings will accomplish is frustration and lousy rounds of golf. If you are serious about improving your game, find a good instructor; take lessons on a reoccurring basis. It should improve your game immensely.

Golf strength and golf fitness are one and the same. There are exercises designed just for the golfer. These exercises will work on areas of the body used in the game of golf. You are not looking into becoming a pro football player, so the exercises required to play football will not be the same exercises need by the golf player.

You will want to try this exercise to better your distance and control. Your wrists are an important part of the golf swing. There are two parts the wrists are responsible for in your swing. It is their job to control the club through out the swing and to provide the power through the strike on the ball.

You will not be able to accomplish these portions of the swing if you have weak wrists. Your wrists need to have total control of the club. Weak wrists are unable to do this because of the clubs length and the weight.

The impact of the ball will cause the lead wrist to collapse or break down. Since the wrist is essential in creating maximum distance and clubface angle, if the lead wrist breaks down it will dramatically cut down on the distance and accuracy of your ball.

To correct this problem, you will want to exercise your wrists to build up their strength. One of the exercises starts with you standing with your arm hanging at your side. Then grab a club in one hand towards the end of the grip. Keeping your arm straight at your side, raise the club bending only your wrist. The toes of the club should be pointing to the sky straight out in front of you. Raise the club as high as you can which will

probably just above the parallel line to the ground. Then lower and repeat 14 more times. Then switch arms.

Do this exercise one or two set per wrist about 3 or 4 times a week. If this exercise is done correctly you will feel a burning in your forearms. If you don't, you may need a longer iron or you could be using more than your wrist.

Next let's take a look at your golf swing, is it too long? Many beginning and amateur golfers have swings that are too long. Human nature would probably be the culprit on this one. It seems to make sense; the longer you swing the farther your ball will travel.

Watching pros play, you will see back swings of varied lengths. Even with their differences there are similarities in their back swings. Pros bend their wrists to their maximum. In other words the angle between the left arm and the golf club during the uppermost portion of the swing is at 90-degrees or less. Most players will lock their wrists because they are trying to hit the ball too hard. This will cause the club to go back too far. The looser the wrists give you more power without the necessity of the club too going back too far.

The rotation of the shoulder in the pro's swing decides how far the left arm goes back. Whether the back swing is short or long it is the amount of shoulder rotation created by each golfer.

The optimum shoulder rotation should be 90-degrees. Some golfers feel tight and are incapable of turning your shoulder back that far. If you feel tight when rotating your shoulder to 90-degrees, the tightness is a good thing. It is telling you, you have created torque in your swing.

In this instance you should think of your body as a spring. When wound up it gets tight, and when you let it go it will snap the other way. If you try to avoid this tightness by over-rotating your hips, you will lose the torque, which is necessary for creating the swing consistent.

To re-cap, during your next trip to the range, keep your body stable while turning your shoulders back until you feel the tightness. Now you have the necessary torques for your back swing. Make sure your wrists are loose so they will bend back to about 90-degrees. You will have the maximum power without your swing going back too far.

If you are a beginning golfer, when you step up to the box to place you tee in the ground. How far down does it go? The answer is: it depends on the club you will be using. The longer the club the higher the tee. The bottom of the golf ball should be level with the top of the driver.

If you are using a shorter club, you will want to lower the tee. For example, a 3-wood you will want the ball to be about one-half to one-third above the club. This is with about a half-inch tee showing above the ground.

If you are using an iron, less tee will be showing above the ground, or about one-quarter of an inch above the ground for the long to mid-irons. For the shorter irons only the head of the tee will be showing above the ground.

With the deep club face drivers on the market, you will need to use a longer tee to get the most you can get out of these new clubs. Make sure your ball is in line off your left instep. Make sure you don't tee your ball too close to your stance or you will pop the ball in the air because of the steep angle of striking the ball. Also make sure you keep the club head behind the ball through the strike to force a little upward blow. This will give you the maximum launch angle and your distance will be improved.

You want to get the most benefit you can from the oversized driver such as the 460cc driver. Your goal will be to get the required amount of spin for lift to be accomplished while at the same time reducing the drag.

If your driver has enough loft there are some things you can do to add to your launch and cut down on the spin rate, which will result in added distance off your tee.

Tee the ball higher. This is going to require a 3-inch tee for the ball to sit high enough for the top of the driver to reach no more than one-third of the way up on the ball.

You will want to move your tee forward in your stance. For some golfers, you will play the ball off your right toe, while for others it may be necessary to position the ball so it is all the way up to the outside of the left foot. You will want to experiment with different ball positions to find the one to work best for you. The point is to hit the ball on the upswing, which will add to the launch angle and cut down on the ball's spin rate.

Hit the ball on the center of the face. A number of golfers have a tendency to set their driver on the ground to make the shot. The end results are driver shots being hit on the heel side of the face. To test yourself, take your stance in front of the ball as you normally would. Then move the club up to the ball's height and note where the ball is going to connect with the face of the driver.

This is a common problem with an awkward adjustment. The solution to this problem is to line up your driver so the toe of the driver is in line with the ball. Now do the test again. Is the ball in line with the center of the driver's face? If so, set the driver down and shoot. If not, keep making adjustments.

You want to hit the ball on the upswing. This driver is a specialty club not unlike your putter. The set-up, the ball position and almost everything else will be different when using this driver. The ball should be hit on the upswing. This will result in an elevated launch angle and a decreased spin rate which is what will get the ball farther than you have before.

Chipping Shots

The two most annoying chipping errors is the fat chip or the chunker which will go nowhere, and the thin chip or the skull which shoots goes off the green and possibly on to a bunker on the other side. Hitting the ball up causes these mistakes. Golfers have a tendency to get the club under the ball and often times hit the ground instead and since the club speed is too slow, the ball ends up going nowhere. If you try to miss the ground all together, you end up hitting the top of the ball with a leading edge. The ball then ends up moving across the ground at a steady pace and goes way beyond your target.

If you could hit the ball before hitting the ground, you can then achieve a clean connection with the ball and improve your results. There is a key to hitting the ground after hitting the ball when you are chipping is speed up. Most golfers are hesitant to speed up while performing a short game. It's the simple fear of the ball going to far after you have hit it.

The answer is not easy, but it is simple. You need to shorten your back swing. The trouble lies in what we see of as a short back swing. It is a habit for you to bring your club back almost to your neckline for those big drives, so you might think a back swing which doesn't go any higher than your waist as a short back swing. In reality if you were to swing from your waist and speeding up the club head down toward the ball, you would more likely than not hit a shot, which will go to an excess of 25 yards. You only want to hit a chip shot for about 10 or 15 yards. Changing your subconscious mind is the reason the solution to the problem of chipping is difficult. Accelerating to hit the ball down is the key to the chip shot, and your short game. Deceleration is the undoing of the chip shot. Keep this in mind when you are trying to perfect your short game.

One of the most important aspects of chipping is to keep the ball rolling; you don't want it in the air. You can use almost any club from a 3-iron to a sand wedge to make your chip shot, but choosing the right club is important. You need to know the formulas to help you decide which club is the right one for your situation. The formula is based on a level green.

When you chip with a 10-iron or the pitching wedge, the ball will be in the air half the distance to the hole and it will roll the other half of the distance. If you chip with an 8-iron the ball will be airborne for one-third of the distance to the hole and roll the other two-thirds of the distance. If you are chipping with a 6-iron the ball will be in the air for one-fourth of the distance and three-fourths of the distance it will be rolling on the ground.

Since this formula is based on a level green, if you are trying to get your ball uphill you will need to go up one club. If you are trying to get your ball downhill, you will need to go down one club. So for the 6-iron formula, you will use a 4-iron to go uphill and an 8-iron to go downhill. With the 8-iron you would use the 6-iron to go uphill and the pitching wedge to go downhill. With the pitching wedge, you would use an 8-iron to go uphill and the lob wedge to go downhill.

When chipping, try to land your ball about 3 feet onto the putting surface and allow the ball to roll the remainder of the way.

When taking your stance, your weight should be on the front foot, with the ball in the middle of your stance and your hand slightly ahead of the ball.

Another important aspect of chipping is to make sure your left wrist stays firm during the chipping motion. If the wrist does break down, it alters the loft on the club, which in turn alters the trajectory of the ball. You will have inconsistent distances will result. If the wrist goes the arm will go with it, which will cause your shot to rapidly across the green.

If you would like to lower your handicap, instead of going to the driving range, head for the chipping green.