

### Establishing a Pre-Shot Routine



#### Benefits

My pre-shot routine actually starts when I pull the club out of my bag. Everything I do from that point on is all part of my swing, just as much as the back swing or the follow through. When my procedure is interrupted, I have trained myself to start my routine over again.

Each and every golfer should have their own pre-shot routine. Meaning, that the mental and physical process of swinging the club actually starts before you take your stance.

You will also notice that all good players nearly always have the club moving, and if the club isn't moving, something else should be moving. If you think about it, muscles that stop are rigid muscles. So, as long as muscles move, there can't be that much tension.

When building a pre-shot routine, learn "how" and "when" to position the club face behind the ball, where to position each foot and when, how to waggle the club and how many times, when to look at the target and target line, and when to pull the trigger. The whole point of learning to do this, is training yourself to do the same thing every time and in rhythm.

This is one of those practice sessions, where in the early stages of learning, you cannot care where the ball goes. Your only goal at this point is to turn those moves into a habit without caring about ball flight. Eventually, it will become comfortable and in rhythm. It will take a little while to train before it all comes together. But once it becomes habit, it will feel automatic, which will eliminate thinking and getting paralyzed over the ball.

The pre-shot routine is critical and it must be practiced and ingrained. It needs to be learned and applied by golfers of all levels. Every shot in the game can benefit from a pre-shot routine. From full swing to putting, the process teaches you how and when to pull the trigger without thinking about it.

#### Guidelines

- The pace of your waggle will reflect the tempo of your swing.
- Each step you do during your routine should be in cadence with the rest.
- Your last move before you pull the trigger should be to look at the target or waggle.
- The simpler the routine the better off you will be.
- Trust what you have trained and use it on every shot you play.

#### Summary

We need to realize that thinking creates tension. Golfers that think too much over the ball, about what they ought to be doing, will end up getting in their own way. Please understand, that it's impossible for your body to carry out all the messages your mind sends.

Learning this game, "We train to trust". In other words, physical or mechanical practice teaches us muscle memory. A good golf swing is very much an instinctive action, which allows you to focus your mind on the target (being able to concentrate on the "where" rather than the "how").

When you are at a point during your training period, where you are trying to bring your game from the practice tee to the golf course, an established pre-shot routine is the bridge to make that important transition.

#### Some PGA Tour players to watch that have a great pre-shot routine:

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| • Jack Nicklaus | • Davis Love III |
| • Tom Watson    | • Tiger Woods    |
| • Fred Couples  | • Stuart Appleby |
| • Mark O'Meara  | • David Toms     |
| • Lee Trevino   | • Aaron Baddeley |

It's worth saying again. Learning a pre-shot routine is the best way of getting your swing and game from the practice tee to the golf course.