

30 Golf Practice Drills

...and why you should do them

Peter Knight

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& why you should do them

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About the Author

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Peter is one of three Master Professionals with the PGA of Australia. He is a current National and State golf coach with 35 years coaching experience. His proven ability to produce results with individuals and teams in golf and other sports has led to him training other coaches in achieving success in a high performance environment.

He has presented on numerous occasions at Coaching Conferences on a range of topics related to coaching.

His coaching philosophy includes these themes

- Attitudes to sport and life are linked; you will think and act in a way that is consistent with your self-concept and this will be reflected in your learning and performance.
- Your experiences and their meanings shape beliefs and ongoing reality.
- All players need to learn to swing the club, hit the ball, play, and then compete. Each step having different requirements.
- Understanding how to improve ball-striking—including all short shots—requires conceptual change in most instances.
- Training is the best indicator of potential success.
- Practicing correctly requires knowledge and discipline. Knowledge is knowing precisely what needs to be done and exactly how to go about doing it. The discipline is in doing it. With knowledge and discipline a skill base can be built that will take a player to their golfing goals.

The best performers in any team environment leave clues to identify why they are the best. Among other things, these include their vision, beliefs and behaviours which can be modelled and taught to other athletes to ensure improved performance across the team. Peter uses a combination of NLP and other coaching skills to nurture the best performer in every individual.



Introduction

Why are you practicing? I already know the answer...it is because you want to play better on the course; shoot lower scores and lower your handicap.

One thing is for sure; you would like to gain more benefit from your practice.

Too many players are able to hit the ball well in practice, yet fail to reproduce that form on the course. There are many possible reasons for this.

- On the course you only get one opportunity.
- You are in a different state of mind on the range compared to the course.
- You still hit poor shots on the range, yet are able to ignore them. On the course those same shots become your primary focus.
- You don't really hit the ball better in practice, you just think you do.
- You don't handle the pressure of competition very well.

These are just some of the reasons. Whatever the reason one thing is for sure: in my experience, the way a player trains is indicative of future success.

The first section of this book describes the philosophy behind Deliberate Practice. When you read the components, you will agree that training in a Deliberate way is much more intensive than any other form of practice.

The second section of the book describes the most common errors players make in practice. This is not about swing faults, more the traps we can all fall into when we are on the road to improvement.

The third section outlines how to develop practice plans and provides templates you can follow.

The final section of the book has some practice drills for you to include in your plans. There are more than you would incorporate into a plan, in fact there are more than 30! Use some as a base for your practice and occasionally use the others to add variety to your practice.

Golf is a complex motor skill and therefore it will take time to gain expertise. Being a fine-motor skill your progress will not be smooth. Just have a look at



how many different winners there are on any professional Tour each year. If improvement and form was stable, then the trophies would be shared by only a few players; the best would always be the best. This is – at the same time – a frustration and one of the elements of the game we love.

Teaching golfers to practice correctly is one of the key influences a coach can have. It isn't as exciting as suddenly having your student turn their slice into a draw (or straight shot), but it can help the student find a way to hit more straight shots in the future.

Very few golfers practice well. They may spend many hours practicing, but mostly it is unproductive. This is true even of professional golfers. And they are playing the game for their livelihood!

I am convinced that almost no-one understands instinctively how to practice well, how to measure their performance in practice or how to create a balanced practice plan that reinforces your strengths and develops your weaknesses.

There are sample practice plans and also blank templates for you to use in designing your own training plan. I don't mind if you copy the practice plan sheets if you are using them as a guide in your practice. It's a bit more practical than taking your laptop to the range just so you can read a couple of pages of this e-book.

Following the suggestions in this book will, at the very least, allow you to gain the maximum benefit from your practice. It might also see your scoring average drop faster than it ever has and allow you to get even greater joy from playing golf.

If you can't transfer your practice improvement to the golf course, then your practice isn't effective. If you follow the advice in this book you will learn what effective practice is. So follow the principles outlined and let me know how much your golf is improved just by practising correctly.

Best wishes for your quality practice.

Peter Knight



Deliberate Practice and performance

If you engage in Deliberate Practice for 10,000 hours or 10 years (it should amount to the same quantity), you can achieve expertise. This is the finding of Anders Ericsson and others who have studied expertise across sport, the arts, academia and other areas.

Given the fine-motor-skill nature of the golf swing and the variety of shots required to compete at world-class level it is apparent that it not only takes a long time to become really proficient at golf but also that there will always be some variation in shot quality, even amongst the very best players.

“The primary distinguishing feature of experts’ swings was their reproducibility”. “The best performers have swings and shots that are reproducible. The higher a player’s handicap, the greater the variability in swings.”
(Ericsson)

Throw in the effect of outside influences and their changeability such as weather, course layout and grasses, types of lies, players’ states of mind, etc., the player is constantly adjusting for differing shot requirements. To have the greatest amount of control the player needs to attend carefully to shot planning and preparation – taking into account all of the important variables related to the shot at hand – and then initiate the swing.

Developing these skills requires that practice be Deliberate Practice. So what does that mean?

Components of Deliberate Practice

- **Practice must have a structure**
 - If left to our own devices, most of us will have haphazard and unplanned practice. This will produce inconsistent and slow progress at best.
 - Most players just practice the same things and expect to improve. For a beginner this will work fine for a period of time, however the beginner will soon reach a fixed point beyond



which improvement won't take place without coaching and focussed practice.

- A structured practice plan will push you to learn and be able to execute skills which are currently just out of reach. There is a healthy tension between what challenges you and something that you have the skills to achieve (even if you can't currently perform at that level).
- If you have a coach, one of the main ways your coach will be able to help you is in showing you how to practice correctly. Better still if they create a practice plan for you to follow.
- *Later in this book is advice on how you can create your own practice plan. You can even just copy the suggestions in this book if you don't have time to create your own and you will gain massive benefit.*
- **Look for different ways of acquiring feedback.** This can come from your coach, video reviews, statistics in practice and play as well as you monitoring changes in swing feels. The ultimate form of feedback which you get on every shot is the feel of contact and the flight of the ball.
 - Record the results of your play and practice to monitor your progress over time. Most golfers feel that they know their game quite well, yet can't even recall their scores from round to round, let alone over a period of time. They will also have no chance of objectively identifying their stats for putting, driving, scrambling or anything else. There are numerous ways to monitor your practice, from simple statistics to more complex web-based programmes. One I use with players I coach is called Shots to Hole (www.shotstohole.com); I highly recommend it.
 - Feedback should be available continuously. The feel of impact and the flight of the ball will provided this. If you are doing drills set by your coach then you will also notice how easily you are able to do the drill and how effective it is for improving your ball flight (or short shot, etc.).
 - Occasional feedback is like your annual review at work. It is usually less than worthless. You need immediate feedback to continue moving forward. How would that be in the workplace?



- **Do similar amounts of practice daily rather than cramming large amounts of practice into just a few days of the week.**
 - Deliberate practice is taxing mentally as your attention is directed entirely to the activity.
 - Lots of practice is required to really improve. This repetition may seem monotonous, however building something that withstands the pressure and anxiety of standing on the first tee takes time and lots of repetition.
- **Set and try to master specific goals in weekly practice.** These may be small elements of the total skill.
 - Not only does this direct your attention specifically, it keeps your mind on the job.
 - It is easier to monitor your progress with specifics than generalities.
- **The duration of your practice is limited by your ability to concentrate.**
 - As soon as your concentration wanders, take a break and either finish for the day or return when you are refreshed.
 - Focussing intensely burn up mental energy, so you will need to take short breaks. Your ability to concentrate will improve over time provided your practice is intense.
- **Practice sessions must stress your ability,** i.e. incorporate competitive practice and difficult drills.
 - Always practice on the outer edge of your comfort zone.
 - Practicing deliberately is not easy. It takes focus, putting up with volumes of similar practice and being continuously mindful of your progress.
 - Improvements are small when you only practice the things you are good at. They aren't the leverage points for massive improvement.
 - Developing your weaknesses is where change happens; doing the things you don't really like doing, but acknowledge are the important things to do.
 - Deliberate practice isn't necessarily fun. In fact, a lot of the time it's not very enjoyable.



Adopt a disciplined approach

The ideas outlined on the preceding pages describe the elements of deliberate practice. Here are some pointers to consider in addition to following your practice plan.

- Make a personal commitment that you will avoid any sloppy practice.
- No iPods. You can't split your attention. I know I'm a male, but have it on good authority that females really can't do two things at once either.
- Practice mental and strategic skills as well as technique. These need to be incorporated into your practice and practice plan. They don't occur in isolation on the course so need to be incorporated into your technical practice. They are also skills (as much as swinging a club correctly) which means they require attention and practice.
- Practice all different types of shots regularly rather than focussing on either your strengths or weaknesses
- Stay away from the tip of the week and work with what your coach is recommending.
- Experts are able to consistently set up the same way, use consistent routines and prepare physically and mentally on every occasion. This highlights the importance of pre-shot routines having highly developed mental and physical components, so practice that as well.

The debate lives on about which is more important: natural talent or deliberate practice. Of course the ultimate – evident in virtually every world champion – is a combination of the two.

Work done by Dr Anders Ericsson on learning as well as Geoff Colvin in *Talent is not Enough* describe how the rule of 10 years or 10,000 hours training will create an expert in the fields they have studied, such as music, the arts, some sports and academia.

I'm not so sure this can be accepted as a blanket proposal. I know plenty of golfers who have practiced hard to achieve expert status, i.e. Becoming a professional playing on one of the main Tours of the world. The majority of these players don't achieve their ambition.



In a sport such as golf, which has an extremely high skills and mental component, it is not enough to just train well for 10 years. There needs to be a basis in athletic skills (preferably a multi-sport background), a young starting age (although not necessarily specialising in golf too soon), exposure to quality coaching and training facilities and an intense desire to excel. Yes, I know, it's a pretty extensive list.

There have been exceptions to this rule, but they are few and far between. When we hear of an exception, it gives heart to those who believe they can succeed even by taking shortcuts. The road to broken dreams is littered with those who tried to get away with taking shortcuts.

The encouraging news is that whatever your aspirations, the Deliberate Practice concepts will accelerate and guarantee your improvement.

The next chapter looks at the mistakes that most players make in practice and how you can avoid them...



7 biggest practice mistakes....and how to avoid them

Been practicing hard but not showing the benefits of all that practice when you get to competition? This is extremely common and it occurs with players of all levels, from Tour players to high handicappers. Frustrating isn't it!

How would you like to ensure that your efforts in practice are transferred to the golf course, especially in competition? Of course that is what every golfer wants.

One way to ensure value from your practice sessions is to avoid making the errors outlined in this booklet by first being aware of them and following the advice



Problem #1 Practicing without a purpose

SOLUTION BE INTENTIONAL IN PRACTICE.

Most players have only a vague idea of what they need to practice and no real idea of the parts of their game which let them down.

They are time poor when it comes to practicing; a couple of hours after school or work never seems enough. At the other end of the scale are players who have decided to dedicate themselves to the game and are spending quite a few hours at the golf course each day yet they still struggle to improve.

If you only have a limited amount of time you need to target your practice time to get the most from it. The habits you develop in training will transfer to the course. If your training habits become a bit sloppy due to boredom and lack of focus then that is what you are most likely to take to the course.

Regardless of how much – or how little – time is available, you need to have a strong intention – or objective – for what you want to gain from your practice session. Keep this intention in mind constantly during the time you are training, it will keep you on track.

For example if you are working on a particular point of technique, then stay with the thought throughout the session, rather than wavering and trying something else. It is fine to use different drills, as long as the primary outcome of the session doesn't change.

If your intention is to complete three different competitive drills, then do so with full commitment to both completing them and doing so with complete attention to the task; as if you were in competition.

Being intentional brings a laser-like focus to the session. Because you are so intimately involved with what you are doing, it will enable you to more easily transfer your learnings to the course.



Problem #2 Not knowing what to practice

SOLUTION KNOW YOUR GAME AND DEVISE A PRACTICE PLAN

Being intentional in your training assumes you know what it is you are going to practice. In most instances players aren't even really sure what to practice.

Nothing wastes more time than wondering what to practice. During the session your internal voice is asking whether you are practicing the right thing or not. This uncertainty will undermine the quality of the session and fail to cement any learnings from the session.

The easiest way to determine the areas of your game most in need of development is to collate statistical data from your game and to analyse it.

Generally there should be approximately a 60:40 break-up of time with 60% devoted to short game (putting, chipping, bunkers and pitching up to around 60 metres). The Rule of Thirds, described later in the book modifies these proportions slightly. There should then be a slight bias toward the areas of the game which are showing up as statistically in need of development. This certainly doesn't mean an 'all the eggs in one basket' approach as that would be unbalanced.

What are the strengths of your game?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

Which are the areas in need of development?

- 1 _____
- 2 _____

What is the priority in practice for you for this month?



Mental skills including visualisation, self-talk, goal setting, state management, concentration, etc can all be practiced during any training session. There is no need to develop them in isolation, as they can all be incorporated into any practice (except perhaps for relaxation). In fact they are either developed as good habits or bad habits during your practice as you respond to good and poor shots you hit while practicing.

Use the templates in this book to set your own practice plan and follow it for a month. You will be so convinced of the benefits that you'll revise your plan and keep going forward.



Problem #4 Neglecting short game

SOLUTION 60% SHORT GAME AND PUTTING

Short game practice is neglected partly because quality short game facilities are unfortunately in short supply throughout most of Australia. Another reason is due to the buzz from hitting a great full shot, compelling golfers to practice hitting those shots.

Most players, if asked how they could improve their game fastest would say that improving their short game would give the fastest improvement in scoring. Yet it is still neglected.

This is proven with more than 50% of shots played by any player being from within 40 metres of the green. The best players in the world are all exceptional when they are putting or playing shots from within 40 metres of the green.

Statistics from the PGA Tour show that the average number of putts taken by the leading players is around 28 putts per round, with 170th place at 30 putts per round¹. Knowing how you compare to these players provides a measure that you can strive to achieve. Even with putting, it will take a long time to achieve this kind of level.

There are numerous short game drills to sharpen your scoring. Set up a scoring sheet using some of the drills in this book or compete against another person in putting and other short shots. This type of competitive practice will highlight areas of weakness due to your increased awareness.

Task: create a pitching, chipping, bunker and putting drill with a scoring system. Complete the drill at least twice a week and plot your progress over a month and notice any changes.

¹ Statistics taken from www.pgatour.com at June 2012



Problem #5 Trying to fix everything at once

SOLUTION ALLOCATE TIME TO EACH IDEA

Club championships or another important match coming up? Most golfers are a bit like students when they have an important game on the horizon, they cram their practice to try to make miracles happen overnight. Just like students cramming for exams the sense of overwhelm with information means that most, if not all the information is forgotten.

To learn anything well and have that learning embedded you need continual exposure. One of the components of Deliberate Practice is repetition.

Deep understanding of fine nuances of shot technique only occurs with practice and viewing the information from varying perspectives. This is true of all things being learned, but especially so of fine motor skills such as golf technique, even for short strokes such as putts and chips.

Holding one or two thoughts at a time will be sufficient to allow improvement to occur, especially if they are key points! Don't try to focus on six things at once!

Devote sufficient attention to one point of focus / piece of information until it has become somewhat automated. This might take a few days and sometimes a few weeks. Persist and be intentional in your practice so that new information or skill becomes part of what you do.

What is the most important thing for you to focus on at the moment?

What specifically are you trying to achieve?

How many practice sessions will you devote to this specific point?



Problem #6 Jumping from tip to tip

SOLUTION

ESTABLISH A COACHING PROGRAMME

Most golfers are obsessed with self-improvement. When someone in your club has some coaching and improves, your curiosity is aroused; what did the coach say to them?

Likewise when reading articles in magazines about Tour players who have been performing well, I'm interested to know why they think they are playing so well.

The most popular section in golf magazines are the instructional pages. We are constantly fed a golfing diet of tips. These tips are all useful when applied correctly in the right context. Golf tips can be like Panadol: useful for a lot of things, but won't help a broken leg. A tip you read might be just the thing for you...or it may not.

In order to ensure the things you are working on in your swing are the right things, the best advice I can offer is to have some coaching.

A coach's assessment of your game and plan for improvement offers direction and also peace of mind that you can trust you are on the right path. With trust it is easier to persist with a correct course of action, especially if your progress is slow.

A coach will ensure that what you are working on is the most important thing to develop. Often the advice a coach gives you will have a systemic influence; the advice helps improve aspects of the swing other than the specific focus. It is an experienced coach's skill which identifies these leverage points.

Make sure you fully understand what the coach is suggesting and why it is being suggested...then commit to it!



Problem #7 Not monitoring your progress

SOLUTION

SCORE YOUR IMPROVEMENT

Your overall progress across time is measured by handicap and stroke average. Your performance can vary quite a bit from round to round, so it is better to view performance over time rather than from round to round.

When you set improvement goals, you need to monitor your progress. If it is occurring, acknowledge it. If there is no improvement, reset your goals and adjust your strategy; there's no point wasting your time. There is nothing more frustrating than finding out that you have been on the wrong path for some time. Monitoring improvement can avoid this.

You should be clear on the most appropriate drills, their purpose and how they fit with your swing. If you have a specific point of technique to monitor, then use mirrors, video, your shadow or other means to know you are accurately carrying out your coach's instruction.

Question the coach to gain a clear understanding of what you are trying to achieve and why it is important for you. Once you have that understanding it will be easier to commit to the instruction. This will make your session both meaningful and beneficial.

You may also be prescribed a competitive drill with a scoring system attached to it. Noting your scoring progress as you complete the drill over a period of a few weeks will alert you to whether improvement is occurring.

What points of technique are you working on?

How are you monitoring this?

What competitive drill are you doing to monitor this?



Rule of Thirds

Practicing serves one primary purpose: to improve your on-course performance. You need to ensure you are doing whatever you can to be able to transfer your improvement to the course.

You must also create balance in your practice plan to ensure you are devoting sufficient time to each area of your game.

One way to achieve a balance in your practice is to be mindful of how your shots are distributed on the course.

In a normal round of golf approximately 40% of your shots will be full shots, 40% will be putts and 20% will be short game shots.

Given the variety of short game shots: chips, pitches and bunker shots, it is fairer to spend 1/3 of your time on your long game, 1/3 on your short game and 1/3 on putting. Nice and easy to remember.

How you sub-divide that time is also crucial. Many players practice only technique when they are hitting full shots on the driving range. While there may be a short-term benefit in the quality of ball striking, there is usually difficulty in taking this improved form to the golf course, particularly under pressure.

To enable a transfer of form from the range to the course, you will need to add variety to your practice and also to create some pressure when you are hitting your shots. For full shots, variety can mean changing the club you are using, your target, shot shape or trajectory, or effort level.

To create pressure and test how robust your skills are, you can carry out competitive drills and games with a scoring system attached to them. One of the most common is the National Skills Test, which has been used by players at the Australian Institute of Sport since the early 1990's.

The National Skills Test has targets set at 90m (3 metres wide), 100m (5m wide), 150m (10m wide) and 200m (20m wide). The clubs used at these distances are wedge, 9 iron, 5 iron and driver respectively. Some adjustment



may be needed for the distances depending on how far you are able to hit the ball.

So how much time should be devoted to technique, variety and skill testing? One third of your time for each.

When you are putting, spend 1/3 on putting technique, such as stroke path or stroke pace; 1/3 of your time on variety, such as green reading or long putting; and 1/3 of your time on skill testing, such as hitting 10 balls from 1 metre at different points around the hole and then hitting a further 10 balls from 2 metres.

When you first adopt the Rule of Thirds to your practice, you are likely to complete the technical part of your session and want to spend just a little more time on it because you have just about got the swing feel you are after or you want to groove a good shot. If you allow yourself to continue working on technique then you could find yourself spending the rest of your practice time still working on technique.

I have seen this countless times. The result is very little balance in your practicing, which is reflected on the course.

Practicing according to the Rule of Thirds, which means adding variety and skills testing to the your practice sessions will create a far better transfer to the course and lead you to becoming a much better golfer in the long run.



Application of the Rule of Thirds

TECHNIQUE

This is where your focus is on swing thoughts and drills. It is essentially massed practice; you'll play many shots with the same club, target and intention (swing focus).

The intention is the key; it could be to develop a consistent routine, shot shape, improve mental preparation, rhythm, and feel for a particular shot or to practice a swing key or two. Essentially it is practicing the same thing with the objective of it becoming more automatic or habitual.

VARIETY

This is the opposite of the technique (massed practice) component. In this type of practice you alter club, target, shot shape or thought/intention on a frequent basis. This way you are not able to find the rhythm that you might find from hitting multiple similar shots.

This seems counterintuitive to improving performance. However because this type of practice requires you to recalibrate your thoughts and feels every shot, it is much more like what happens on the golf course.

This type of practice is far more challenging, but leads to far greater long-term performance gains than massed practice alone.

COMPETITIVE

Here, the mental component of your game is challenged and developed along with technique. Pressure is introduced either by incorporating a scoring system or by competing against one or more players, or both. Competitive practice provides an opportunity for improving (mental and emotional) state management; developing resilience & concentration; recovery from poor shots; coping with performing poorly or even performing really well.

On the next pages are some sample practice plans which you can use as a template in creating your own. You might even be happy using these ones, although I encourage you to modify them over time so that you keep to the principle of creating variety in your practice.



Practice Plan – Sample

Session 1	Category	Time	Activity
Pitching	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus (with your coach) or • Match swing length & acceleration to distance
Pitching	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set targets at 20-60m (min 5 targets) and hit to each one alternating the wedge you are using and the target.
Pitching	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a pitching drill from the drills sheets and do this drill for 8 weeks.
Full swing	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus
Full swing	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select targets and use full pre-shot routine. • Change clubs after every 2 or 3 shots
Full swing	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select one full shot drill from the drills sheets. • Vary the drill over the 8 weeks.

Session 2	Category	Time	Activity
Putting	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus or • Stroke length: through stroke is 1.5 times the length of the backstroke.
Putting	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ladder drill (see drills sheets)
Putting	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a long and short putting drill from the drills sheets and complete for 8 weeks.
Chipping	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus or hands-free motion
Chipping	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chip to a towel (landing) with various clubs
Chipping	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a chipping drill from the drills sheets and do for 8 weeks.



Practice Plan – Sample cont...

Session 3	Category	Time	Activity
Full swing	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus
Full swing	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine-ball drill with 8i, 5i and driver
Full swing	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select one full shot drill from the drills sheets. • Vary the drill over the 8 weeks.
Putting	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus or path and face (e.g. coin drill)
Putting	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hit long putts with eyes closed and guess finish position
Putting	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a long and short putting drill from the drills sheets and complete for 8 weeks.

Session 4	Category	Time	Activity
Bunkers	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus or • Transfer of momentum, i.e. slow arms and fast clubhead.
Bunkers	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hit to different targets; long and short shots
Bunkers	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a bunker drill from the drills sheets and complete the same one for 8 weeks.
Full swing	Technique	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current focus
Full swing	Variation	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine-ball drill with 7i, 4i and fairway wood
Full swing	Competition	20mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select one full shot drill from the drills sheets. • Vary the drill over the 8 weeks.



My Practice Plan

Session 1	Category	Time	Activity	Done
			•	
			•	
			•	
			•	
			•	
			•	

Session 2	Category	Time	Activity	Done



PRACTICE PLAN SESSIONS 3 & 4

Session 3	Category	Time	Activity	Done
			•	
			•	
			•	
			•	
			•	
			•	

Session 4	Category	Time	Activity	Done



Practice Drills

FULL SWING

- 📌 Regular service approach for pivot
 - Practice your pivot without a club and with your hands across your shoulders. Use your reflection or shadow to check the correctness of your pivot. Do this 4-5 times, slowly at first.
 - Make some practice swings with the club 4-5 times to reinforce the correct pivot feel.
 - Hit 2-3 shots again focussing on your pivot.
 - Continue this for 20mins.
 - This approach can also be used for checking your grip, alignment, posture, club path, etc.

- 📌 Technique focus
 - Have 3-4 practice swings for every shot hit. This is so that you can focus completely on the feel and correctness of your swing.
 - Continue this for 20mins.
 - This is a form of mindful practice, where you are sensitive to things such as pressure on your feet, slight changes to arm, hand and club positions, etc.

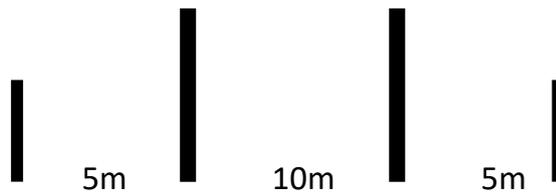
- 📌 Nine Ball Drill
 - Hit shots at three different heights (low, standard & high) and three different shapes (draw, fade & straight).
 - Complete with 3 different clubs. That will be a total of 27 shots.
 - Record your results so you can see which shots you are able to play consistently well and which ones you generally struggle with.

- 📌 Routine Drill
 - This is more about the routine than the swing. Note the elements of your pre-shot routine.
 - In what order do you take your grip, place the club behind the ball, set your posture and set your stance. Hint: that is an excellent order.
 - How smoothly can you work through the elements of your routine without becoming engaged with thoughts about your swing? Here is a video showing the [steps of the routine](#)



📖 Aussie Rules Drill (competitive)

- Set targets at 150m as shown below.
- Play match play against an opponent. If you score a goal and your opponent scores less, you win the hole.
- Play for 9 or 18 holes.
- If you are practicing on your own then play two different clubs or two different shot types.
- You can also allocate points for this drill: 10 points for a goal and 5 points for a behind



📖 Plane line drill

- Set a shaft or alignment rod in the ground beside you (as shown in the picture). Set the rod at the same angle your shaft is at address.
- The shaft should be the same distance from your back foot as the length of the shaft of the club you are using.
- When you swing back, your club will just brush the rod. As your downswing is narrower than your backswing you can swing freely without being concerned with hitting the rod.
- Watch a video of this drill at <http://bit.ly/JxXlml>



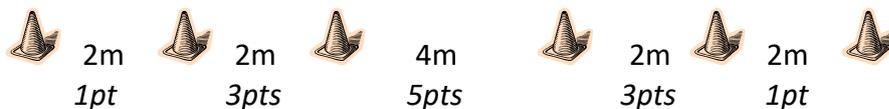
🚩 Start line drill

- Place a shaft or alignment rod in the ground about 4 metres in front of you directly on your target line.
- When you hit a shot you are attempting to start the ball over the rod.
- If you are shaping the ball you may want to start it left of the rod and manoeuvre the ball to the right in the air or vice versa.



🚩 Short iron target drill

- Set witch's hats at 125m and the distance between the targets as shown below.
- Hit 5 shots each with your wedge, 9 iron and 8 iron. For the 15 shots count your points total and record the result.



🚩 Mid iron target drill

- Set witch's hats at 150m and the distance between the targets as shown below.
- Hit 5 shots each with your 7 iron, 6 iron and 5 iron. For the 15 shots count your points total and record the result.



🚩 Long iron target drill

- Set witch's hats at 175m and the distance between the targets as shown below.
- Hit 5 shots each with your 4 iron, 3 iron & hybrid (use alternative clubs if you don't carry these).
- For the 15 shots count your points total and record the result.



🚩 Fairway wood target drill

- Set witch's hats at 200m and the distance between the targets as shown below.
- Hit 5 shots each with your fairway wood or woods. For the shots count your points total and record the result.



🚩 Driver target drill

- Set witch's hats at 225m and the distance between the targets as shown below.
- Hit 5 shots each with your driver. For the shots count your points total and record the result.



PITCHING

📖 30m trajectory control

- Set a target at 30m with a 3m radius.
- Hit shots with low, standard and high trajectories with one club.
- Note which shots seem easier to play and which ones seem to be greater risk shots.
- Repeat the drill using different wedges and note which ones work well and which ones need practice.
- Your objective is to find which shot types are best suited with a particular club.
- While this drill is recommended for 30m, you can do the same drill over varying distances and find out which club and shot type best suit different distances.

📖 Ladder drill

- Lay shafts, rods or markers on the ground at 20, 22, 24, 26 & 28m.
- Hit shots into the 20-22m gap until you have landed three in the gap.
- Continue advancing through each gap once you have landed three shots in each gap.
- Count the total number of shots required. The minimum number is 12.



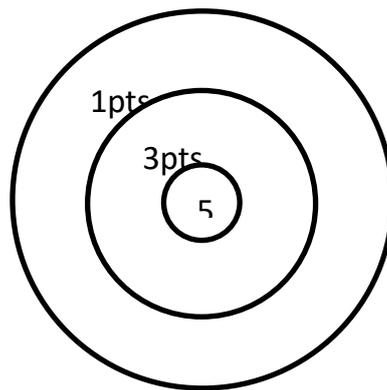
📖 Random targets

- Set out 4 markers or witch's hats at random distances between 20-50 metres.
- Hit to each of the targets changing either the target or the wedge you are using on each shot.
- This teaches you to continually recalibrate your feel for the shot.
- Practice this for 15-20 minutes.



Bullseye pitching

- Set a target with concentric circles.
- Play 5 pitches from each distance: 20m, 40m, 60m & 80m
- Circle sizes
 - 5pt area - 2m diameter
 - 3pt area – 4m diam
 - 1pt area – 6m diam
- Markers can be used to define the target areas. Alternatively, marker paint can be used. If using marker paint then it is best to use a line attached the centre of the circle to guide the marking of a circle.



Rough and Lob Shots

- Circle sizes
 - 5pt area – 1m diameter
 - 3pt area – 2m diam
 - 1pt area – 3m diam
- Hit 5 shots from a lie in the rough from a distance of between 15 and 20 metres.
- Hit 5 shots over a bunker from a distance of between 15 and 20 metres.
- There are a total of 10 shots played in this drill.



CHIPPING

📖 Chip to a towel

- Place a towel on the green and practice landing your chip shots on the towel with various clubs. This teaches carry distance control.

📖 Chipping Ladder Drill

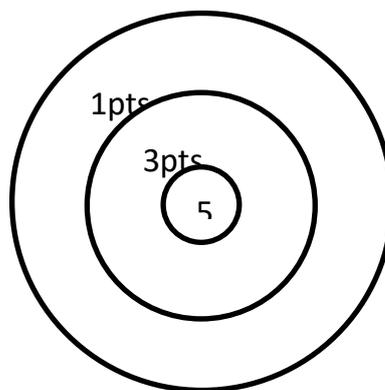
- Lay shafts/rods on the ground at 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9m.
- Hit shots into the 5-6m gap until you have landed three in the gap.
- Continue advancing through each gap once you have landed three shots in each gap.
- Count the total number of shots required. Min 12.

📖 10 & 20m Chips

- Lay out a target circle of tees around a hole with a radius of 1m.
- Hit 10 chips from 10m and 10 chips from 20m.
- Count how many finish inside the circle.

📖 Bullseye Chipping

- Repeat with at least 3 different clubs
- Circle sizes
 - 5pt area – 0.5m diam
 - 3pt area – 1.0m diam
 - 2pt area – 1.5m diam
- Hit 5 chips from 10m and 5 chips from 20m to the hole marked with the target circles. There are a total of 10 shots played in this drill.



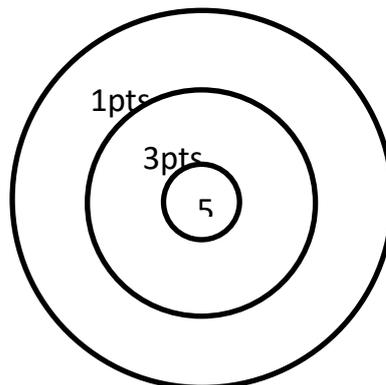
BUNKERS

📄 10 & 20m Bunker Shots

- Lay out a target circle of tees around a hole with a radius of 1.5m.
- Hit 10 bunker shots from 10m and 10 shots from 20m.
- Count how many finish inside the circle.

📄 Bullseye Bunker Shots

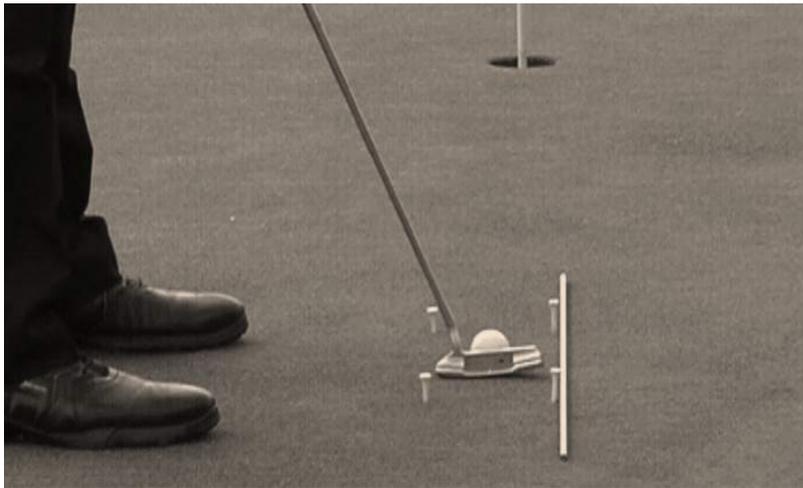
- Set a target with concentric circles.
- Circle sizes
 - 5pt area - 1m diameter
 - 3pt area – 2m diameter
 - 1pt area – 3m diameter
- Markers can be used to define the target areas. Alternatively, marker paint can be used. If using marker paint then it is best to use a line attached the centre of the circle to guide the marking of a circle.
- Hit 5 bunker shots from a distance of 10m and 5 shots from a distance of 20m. There are a total of 10 shots played in this drill.



PUTTING

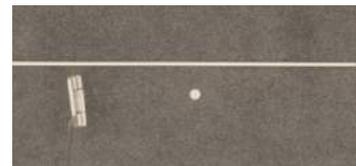
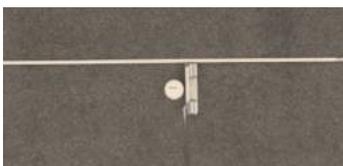
🚩 Putting Gate Drill

- Set out four tees as shown. Two tees just outside the toe of the putter, 10cm either side of the ball and two tees just outside the heel of the putter, 10cm either side of the ball.
- When the putter swings back and through it will move in a slight arc, however its path will be quite straight at the start of the backswing and as it moves through impact.
- If you hit any of the tees during a putt, your stroke will be moving on an incorrect path.



🚩 Coin Drill

- Place a coin underneath the ball.
- At address the putter face points to the ball and coin. It also points to the hole on a straight putt.
- At the end of the backswing, the putter face points to the ball and coin.
- At the end of the stroke the putter face points back to the coin.
- At any point during the stroke the putter face points to the coin.



🚩 Luke Donald Drill

- Set tees at distances of 5, 6, 7, 8, 9ft at four points around the hole.
- Hit putts at random places until you have hit a putt from each point. There will be 20 in total.
- How many did you hole out of 20?

🚩 Ladder drill—10-20ft

- Set tees in the green at 10, 12, 14, 16, 18 & 20ft.
- Hit putts into the 10-12ft gap until you have had three finishes in the gap.
- Continue advancing through each gap once you have three shots in each preceding gap.
- Count the total number of shots required. Min 15.

🚩 Ladder drill—30-45ft

- Set tees in the green at 30, 33, 36, 39, 42 & 45ft.
- Hit putts into the 30-33ft gap until you have had three finish in the gap.
- Continue advancing through each gap once you have three shots in each preceding gap.
- Count the total number of shots required. Min 15.

🚩 Payne Stewart Drill

- Set tees in the green at 3, 4 & 5ft from the hole at 4 points around the hole.
- Beginning at 3ft, hole each putt from 3ft, then advance to 4ft, then 5ft. Continue until you have holed all putts.
- If you miss, start again.
- How long does it take you to hole 12 in a row?



🚩 Eyes closed drill

- Hit putts to a hole which is at least 6 metres (20 feet) away with your eyes closed.
- Before opening your eyes, guess where the ball will finish in relation to the hole; both accuracy and distance.
- This drill will highlight how well you match your feel for the contact and the distance the ball rolls.

🚩 Lag putting drill

- Create a semi circle of tees around the back of the hole with a radius of 0.5 metre.
- Hit 10 putts from 10m (30ft) and count how many finish inside the semi circle.
- Repeat the drill so you are hitting 10 putts uphill and 10 putts downhill.

ON COURSE DRILLS

🚩 3-Point Golf

- For each full shot played on the course, the player has to nominate
 - Start line
 - Shot shape
 - Finish point (this can be an area)
- Each shot carries a maximum of 3 points. The player with the highest number of points wins.
- Nominating a shot's characteristics creates a clearer image in your mind and also a greater sense of commitment to the shot.

🚩 Two ball best ball.

- Hit two shots from the tee and select the best from which to play your second shot.
- Continue this way with every shot for 9 or 18 holes.
- This is an exciting game because it shows how well you can play.



Acknowledgment

I am constantly grateful for the friendship of fellow professional golfers around the world and particularly in Australia. The drills outlined in this booklet are ones I have learned largely from them. They usually evolve from one coach suggesting a new drill, something they have heard of or a modification to an existing drill. I am sure some have evolved from Chinese Whispers.

All coaches take great pride in the improvements made by the people that coaching. I hope the ideas and concepts in this book will help both players and coaches get better results with their golf.

