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Golf Swing Thoughts Help Develop Consistency

By Jack Moorehouse

Swing thoughts on the practice range are an unquestioned strategy. They simplify a complex situation. They speed the learning process. And they help develop trust in your swing. How about during a match? Do swing thoughts help there? What are the best swing thoughts to have?

While instructors differ on which are the best swing thoughts during a match, they all agree on one thing: Thoughts like "Keep your elbow tucked in," "Finish with your belt buckle facing the target," or "Keep your head still" only foul up your swing when playing. In fact, many golf tips on swing thoughts reject the whole idea.

It's not that these thoughts are bad. They're not. They're right on target. Entire golf lessons are designed around them. And they're great in practice. They keep you focused on what you're doing.

But eliminate them during a match. Why? They focus on swing mechanics and that's something to avoid when actually swinging a club. Check any golf instruction manual. They will tell you the same thing: You can't command your body to work in a certain way when hitting the ball. Trying to do so creates more problems than it solves.

Instead, focus on your target. That, after all, is your real goal. Forget about where your hands are or where your hips are. Concentrate on where you want the ball to land and link to it creatively and emotionally. Develop a mental picture of that spot and keep it in mind as you swing.

If you must have a swing thought, keep it simple. And non-mechanical. Many PGA pros focus on a single thought, which eliminates thoughts about swing mechanics.

Ernie Ells keeps this thought in mind when he swings "Low and slow." That's it. He doesn't think about where his hands are, where his weight is, or where his body is going to end up. That's for when he's taking a golf lesson from his swing coach. Instead, he focuses on taking the club back low and slow, eliminating everything else.

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Fred Shoemaker, author, a pioneer in golf instruction, and founder of the golf school Extraordinary Golf, is adamant about swing thoughts. Replace thoughts about your mechanics with thoughts about the "feel" of your swing. Think about tempo and rhythm rather than where and when. If you must have a swing thought, says Fred, have one that reinforces the feel of your swing.

Fred has his students practice throwing clubs to emphasize this idea. At first, they throw a club 15 feet. Then, they throw one with a slightly fuller swing, about 25 feet or so. After about 200 throws, they throw one with a complete golf swing. Of course, this club throwing is done under strict supervision and safety conditions.

Once Fred's students master club throwing, they move to the tee. The goal there is remembering how it feels to throw a club when you hit a ball. They focus on that idea and that idea alone.

Another approach is to have a thought that triggers something in your swing, thoughts that

- Mentally in-plant your target line
- Mimics the actual swing
- Produces a smooth take away
- Triggers the downswing.
- Promotes relaxation while swinging

Establish a target line for your ball flight before you address the ball. Keep that thought in mind when you hit and try to copy it with your ball flight. That forces you to keep the target line in mind, not your mechanics.

Most professional golfers take a few practice swings before they address the ball. They want the feel of the swing before they hit the ball. Recreational golfers ought to do the same. Take a few practice swings. Remember how it feels. Keep that "feel" in mind when you hit.

Focus on a thought that promotes a smooth takeaway. Slow and easy. Or, slow and smooth. Anything that produces a nice takeaway helps. Remember, the takeaway and backswing do one thing: position you for the downswing.

The downswing begins the chain reaction of feet, knees, thighs, and shoulders. Any thought that triggers this chain reaction helps deliver the blow at impact. Try thoughts like, "Plant your left heel," or "Slide your left knee toward the target." Anything that helps you transfer your weight to your left side works well.

Also try to complete the backswing in a relaxed manner. Think of anything that will occupy the time between your takeaway and the completion of your backswing. That brief time is critical. It's when golfers think about their mechanics instead of their targets.

Consistency is every golfer's goal. To achieve it, we need a swing that is repeatable under pressure every time we play. Developing that swing, however, isn't easy. It takes hard work and plenty of practice.

Having a thought process that repeats itself time and time again helps you develop that swing as well. If the mental side of your game syncs with the physical side, achieving swing consistency gets easier.

More importantly, it cuts strokes from your game, which, in turn, generates a lower handicap.

Jack Moorehouse publishes a free weekly newsletter with the latest golf tips and instruction and has helped thousands of golfers lower their handicaps quickly. He is the author of the best-selling book *How To Break 80*

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Some Tips To Improve Your Golf Swing

By Edwin Shackleford

So, your golf swing needs improvement and you know it? Here are some tips in making better golf swings. Tip no. 1. A great golf swing does not mean you have to swing with arms.

Behind your back, put your golf club while you turn your back to your target. It is like taking your club back as you hinge your arm at your shoulder.

You could also practice the drill known as no arms.

Tip no. 2. You should not forget cocking wrists. Do not forget cocking your wrists. This might be difficult at first, but it will be natural to you with enough practice. Tip no. 3. You should let the left arm clockwise slightly when you start the back swing. It is not really something that you actually should remember. It naturally happens if you would just allow it. This just means that you should not resist this movement that is just natural. You might not notice it, but you might have been resisting this movement because this causes the head of your golf club to go open slightly when you swing it. Just allow it to happen. Tip no. 4. Plant your feet firmly on the ground. You might have copied this from baseball. That is, letting your foot heel in front to come above the ground when you swing your golf club back. Some people think that by doing this so, their back swing feels more huge.

It is something that seems lifting the front heel can easily make the body coil and for the tension to build that much harder. Letting the foot roll freely to the inside is fine. However, one should keep that foot on the ground to make golf back swing well-anchored. Tip no. 5. From the bottom golf down swing.

Assuming that you accomplish all the drills correctly - from the golf stance, the golf grip you have, and your golf back swing. But you can still ruin everything if you begin the golf swing that you have with the shoulders. You might want to use a swing trigger to begin the golf down swing that you have with the lower part of your body. Tip no. 6. And again, on your golf down swing. You should turn the belt buckle to your target.

Try turning your hips as powerful and fast as possible when you do your golf down swing, it works.

Edwin Shackleford has been helping individuals improve thier golf game for years. Visit His Site Today

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