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Practicing Golf Trouble Shots

By George Gabriel

A lot of times on the golf course you will find that you are not in the middle of the fairway, or not in the fairway at all. Putting yourself in and around a tree on the practice range will help your decision making out on the golf course on what golf club to choose, and how to play it.

Most good golfers put themselves in trouble shot situations and bad lies on the practice range. Practicing this drill for a month, two or three times a week with a large bucket of golf balls each time, will improve your trouble shot making, and help lower your scores. You will find with practice and persistence you can save a par, or even birdie one or two holes out on the golf course more often than not. Keep in mind, saving a few strokes or better is 50% skill and 50% luck that you will succeed. The odds will increase or decrease depending on how much you practice these golf shots out on the practice range. It is always a good idea to play it safe, by chipping out.

By practicing golf trouble shot drills on the golfing range, you will sometimes visualize a prior practice shot taken on the range when you're confronted with a trouble shot out on the golf course. Visualizing the golf shot from this practice routine requires a little bit of consistent practice. The golf shot will be a lot easier if you have done it many times over. You will need to take six golf clubs, (3 iron, 5 iron, 7 iron, wedge, 5 wood and driver) or your favorite golf clubs to the practice range along with a huge bucket of balls to keep your golf memory in shape. The idea of this trouble shot practice is to memorize distance and ball flight using different clubface ball positions and lies. This is a very enjoyable practice routine and exercise that requires a little patience, imagination and memory.

Find a tree between the golf ball and the green. You do not need a green behind the tree. It would be a lot more fun to watch your golf shots land and roll on the green, if there was one nearby. Stand behind the tree and hold the grip of the golf club with your fingers, and rest the club head on the grass with the clubface facing you. Put the bottom of your foot on the face of the golf club and let the grip go. Look and see if the tip of the golf club is pointing upwards and over the tree. Should the grip end of the golf club point at any part of the tree. Chances are, you haven't got enough club loft to go over. You may need to go under the tree or find a loftier club. You can do this test with any club iron on the golf course.

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The idea of this drill is to know how low and far you can roll a golf ball out to the fairway or green, and how much distance and loft you need to get over a tree. The key memory for the practice would be the golf club selection for both the loft and distance for the target you're aiming for. One club may be low enough to get you under the obstacle, but may be too much club for the target area. You may want to consider choking down on the club to take a little distance off the shot. The other club may have enough loft, but not enough distance. Do this routine with different club selections often. For the distant trouble shots try a 1 wood and a 3 iron under the branches of a tree. (Use extra caution for these clubs near a tree. Also look around for other players before attempting any blind golf shot.)

With your first 10 balls, practice hitting it low to the ground. Always pick a target and put some kind of obstacle in front of you. Practice with a tree right in front of you or 100 yards away with the imaginary green behind it, if you have no access to a practice green. Try to keep the golf ball from flying into the tree, or make the ball land just before and roll beyond onto your imaginary target or green. You will have to use your imagination for this shot and practice with several different clubface positions. You

need to practice playing the ball in front, middle, or back in your stance. You may want to practice going around the tree if you're a substantial distance from the green. Close the clubface to help it hook, or open the face of the club to help slice it around the tree. There are a lot of good professional teachers, books and videos on the Internet to help you master the hook and slice effect of the ball at will. Practice your chipping distance for certain clubs, by chipping out to the side of trouble. It is a good idea to know how far you can chip a certain golf club so you don't end up on the other side of the fairway, and or behind another obstacle.

Practice your trouble shots in a sand trap as well. Place a group of balls behind a big lip of a sand trap. Move some in the front and back of the trap. Do not forget to stand on a couple of golf balls for that buried golf ball effect. Now take your time hitting the golf balls, keeping in mind for an open clubface, and a slightly closed clubface for those buried lies. Is the sand hard or soft? Take more sand for shorter distances from the flagstick, and less sand for those longer shots. Your target for striking the sand should be 1 to 3 inches behind the golf ball, depending on your distance from the flagstick. Accelerate at impact. Follow through and do not quit on the shot. Again you will find more information on the Internet for mastering these types of trouble shots. Practice until you prefer to be in a trap on the golf course, because it's your favorite golf shot. This will raise your level of confidence when approaching a green on the course with bunkers around it. With enough practice you will actually see the ball drop in the hole coming out of the bunker from time to time. Eventually you will find yourself on the green trying to read the roll of the putting surface before you take the bunker shot.

Take out your 5 wood to practice aiming for the tall timbers. Know your distance. The 5 wood flies high and far. Try to put yourself close to the trees and back, to see how close is too close, and how far back is too far back. Do not forget to practice those long high fades and draw shots.

When you have practiced this drill enough times, it will almost seem like second nature when attempting these same golf trouble shots. You will either impress your foursome or make them stand there in awe. The other ingredients you will need to benefit from this practice routine are confidence and a positive mindset. The game of golf is almost magical at times. What seems impossible at times can have yourself shaking your head in disbelief and saying to yourself. "I can play like a pro!"

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Learned to play golf as a caddie. Later on made the High School golf team. Played 54 holes a day during school summer break to keep my game in shape. You can find discount tee times at

<http://www.golfanchor.net>

and a online golf store at

<http://www.golfanchor.com>

Get Into A Routine Of Lowering Your Handicap

By Jeff O`Brien

Certainly there is no shortage of advice and tips when it comes to subject of improving your golf game. I alone am constantly being asked on how to improve on the various parts of someone's golf game.

Tips and advice, although a good place to start, aren't the panacea for all that ails one's golf game. All the advice in the world is only as good as the person's desire to practice and implement the advice.

Practice is essential. Just playing more and more isn't practicing. If you're serious about improving your game you have to practice on a regular basis.

Think about it for a moment. If you bemoan your sand play, but the only `practice' you get is when you are on the course playing, how much practice and attention is your sand game receiving? Not much. During the course of an actual round of golf how many sand shots will you be required to execute? Even with a bad day on the beach not many at all. If this is you, don't be frustrated when you blade your sand shots way over the greens and triple bogey holes.

Practice not only improves your ability to make shots... the added bonus is that it also improves your overall confidence in your game. Golf is like anything else, what you get out of it is directly related to how much you put into your game. Even if you don't have the time for prolonged practice sessions, try to take advantage of any free time just to grab a club and work on your swing. The road to improvement isn't how long you can practice at any given time; rather it is how often you can practice if even for a short time.

Next, if you gotten yourself into the habit of regularly practicing; then when you do play your rounds of golf then take them seriously. Learn to control your emotions and focus on each shot. Every stroke counts and they all add up one at a time, so take your game seriously. This doesn't all mean you take the fun out of the game, you just increase your focus and purpose.

Since you are now practicing regularly (even if only for a short time) and playing with more focus and purpose, your game is beginning to improve. If you haven't by now you should look at upgrading your golf clubs. I'm suggesting that you break the bank on your next set of clubs, but if you've never been fitted properly for a set of clubs you will, at some point, limit your improvement progression. Also, since your practicing more and playing better, your swing will be settling into a more consistent routine. As a

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result, getting some properly fitted clubs will be a better investment, than if your swing was about to dramatically change.

As your game continues to improve, the areas of your golf game that need attention and improvement won't be so glaringly obvious. So, the next level of improvement will take a bit of analysis. I always encourage people at this stage of their development to keep stats on their game. When you do this you are able to pinpoint trends and weaknesses in your game that you may not be so readily able to determine just by trying to evaluate on a round by round basis. So start keeping track of your fairways hit, greens in regulation, 3 putts, putts that you miss inside of 6 feet, sand saves, up and downs from around the green.

By now you are well on your way to playing significantly better golf. I know that the short time span of

this article isn't directly related to the time you'll need to spend to improve your game, but if you persist with your practicing you'll prevail. So, by now you've come full circle and now need to continually evaluate your golf game and improve on those trouble spots and weaknesses.

Aside from the obvious benefits of improving your golf game which is lowering your handicap, is now you'll really begin to appreciate the beauty, the challenges, and the uniqueness of each and every course you play. Each course will take on it's own personality for you. Because, let's face it, all the courses look about the same from the rough or the trees.

Jeff O'Brien offers instruction and insight on golf that will get your golf swing and golf game on track or off to a good start by establishing a good foundation on which you will build your golf swing and game. Please visit (

<http://www.golf-ology.com>

) for more of Jeff's golf tips, articles and online golf lessons.



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