

# GOLF

INCLUDES  
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CD  
OF EXERCISES



LOWER YOUR SCORE

WITH

MENTAL TRAINING

TOM SAUNDERS MD

# GOLF

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## LOWER YOUR SCORE WITH MENTAL TRAINING

TOM SAUNDERS MD



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- Exercise 2 (Track 3): An exercise to learn self-hypnosis
- Exercise 3 (Track 4): A meditation on the focus word  
Committed
- Exercise 4 (Track 5): A meditation on the focus word  
Confidence
- Exercise 5 (Track 6): An exercise to learn to modify blood flow to one's fingers
- Exercise 6 (Track 7): A Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) technique, the SWISH, to stop recurring errors in golf
- Exercise 7 (Track 8): Explore peak performance feelings (and use them to help develop the feelings in an upcoming game)

# I N T R O D U C T I O N

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*“... this much is certain: golf is a game in which attitude of mind counts for incomparably more than mightiness of muscle.”*

*– Arnold Haultain, 1908*

When this program began in 1989 there were few mental training programs available for the average golfer. There were books and videos outlining the psychological aspects of golf, but they didn't really help the golfing reader make that knowledge work for them.

This program combines a source book and a CD. The book outlines the theories and techniques for developing your *inner mental skills*, and the recorded exercises on the CD help you to make that knowledge a part of your mental state for playing better golf.

Golf is essentially about the present moment – now, this shot. You play the shot that faces you, and play it to the best of your ability. And when you are in the middle of one of those flows of good golf, you are not haunted by the memory of bad shots. Your concentration is positive and you don't stand there telling yourself what not to do ... how not to play this shot.

When things aren't going so well, however, negative thoughts creep in. Instead of concentrating on what to do, your mental focus shifts to what to avoid – where not to hit the ball, what not to do.

*Golf: Lower Your Score With Mental Training* explains a quick and effective method for producing more of those great flows of golf, and avoiding the pitfalls and the negative thinking. You will discover how easy it is to develop – and keep – a confident frame of mind for better shot making. You will learn to be positive about your game and to expect to play well. Your enjoyment of the game will increase as your scores improve.

The key lies in the *inner mental skills* that allow you to learn better, to hone your swing, and to increase your enjoyment of the game of golf. Most of our everyday mental activity is logical and sequential. In our normal thinking we spend a lot of time problem solving, analysing and planning. But performing well in sport requires a different sort of thinking. We need to achieve the right level of relaxation, use imagery in creative ways and focus on the here and now, shutting out everything else. These are the *inner mental skills*.

## C H A P T E R   F O U R

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# KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE BALL

*“The ability to control thought processes, to concentrate on a task (e.g. to ‘keep your eye on the ball’) is almost universally recognised as the most important key to effective performance in sport.”*

*– Robert M. Nideffer*

### CONCENTRATION

Concentration in golf involves a focus on a narrow, restricted area of attention.

When you resolutely direct your attention toward one activity, several things happen. One is that you reduce or block out other sensations, whether the activity you’re concentrating on is real activity or imaginary. Also,

narrowing your attention to a very few things is a way into the altered state of awareness – the hypnotic or meditative state that is like daydreaming. And it is an example of the effortless flowing concentration you need for good shot making.

Concentration is one of those things that gets worse as you try harder. You cannot force yourself to concentrate. It has to be effortless and you must allow yourself to be absorbed in the shot facing you. As you are about to make a shot, suddenly thinking, “I must concentrate” is likely to have exactly the opposite effect.

Golfers who look completely absorbed in a shot are creating images, relaxing, going through an anchoring routine and preparing themselves mentally. They are not concentrating on concentrating.

Jack Nicklaus looks as if he’s in a world of his own during every shot. When playing in England he was lining up a putt when a large jet flew over, quite low and

very noisily. When someone asked him whether the plane had put him off, Jack said, “What plane”?

He maintains that playing the ball to a target in a certain way depends 10% on his swing, 40% on his setup and stance, and 50% on his mental picture.

To achieve concentration, he takes time to become absorbed in his imagery. He says, “First I see the ball land in the target area, then the flight of the ball to that target, and finally, I focus on the feeling of the swing for that shot.” Remember that images are reality, so Jack’s method is like practicing the shot just before he makes it. Like the skier I described in Chapter Three, his muscles are busy with the image of the swing just before he makes the shot.

## A GREAT PRACTICE ROUTINE

The next time you practice, stand behind the ball and pick a target within reach of an easy short iron. Take a moment or two to imagine the ideal flight of the ball to

## **CHAPTER SUMMARY**

Concentration is essential for good shot making. Anchors and triggers are practical strategies for improving concentration on the shot you're about to make. They are easily learned. Develop a trigger to start your pre-shot routine and move your shot making into automatic mode. Find and practice anchors that will override negative feelings when you're faced with this shot in tense situations. Then allow yourself to become involved with the images of what you wish to accomplish.

## **LIFE OUTSIDE GOLF**

Anchors are also effective for life outside golf. They can help you improve performance at work and in social situations.

## FEELING MEMORIES

There are many pleasant images in the memory of a peak performance. There is the sound of a putt dropping into the hole, the beautiful flight of the ball to the target, the tempo and the fluid motion of a swing repeated over and over. More important to the experience are the associated good feelings, the feeling memories so well described by Doug Brown.

I was introduced to the idea of recalling a peak performance at a hypnosis conference. The speaker asked each person in the audience to develop the altered state and then to access our memory bank to find a peak experience. I was pleasantly surprised to recall a flying experience that I hadn't thought of for years.

It happened during an end of course flight test, part of my RCAF elementary flying course in the summer of 1943. The little Tiger Moth seemed a part of me, an extension of myself. I performed each task the instructor gave me the best I had ever done. I hit the slipstream at the

end of every turn and loop. The barrel rolls described a perfect circle around the point on the horizon. The landing was so smooth; I thought the wheels started to turn on the grass before touchdown.

You can probably tell from reading this description that I still have the feelings of the experience. I have had a few peak experiences in golf, and in each instance the feelings were identical to those of my flying experience.

In the simulation of Exercise 7, you learn to separate out the feeling memories of a peak experience. You can then focus on these feeling images, and project them into a game you play out in your mind – for example, a preview of an important game to be played the next day.

Bob McArthur, a young professional who was a member of my first series of seminars, used this technique and won most of the tournaments for assistant professionals that year. By itself, this technique will not guarantee a repeat peak performance, but it will improve your performance because you will expect to play confidently.

A sustained peak performance has other components too. You must be in good physical condition and have a good basic swing. You must also have well-trained inner mental skills.

Focusing on the very positive feelings associated with a previous ideal performance allows you to expect some errors, but because of your confident feelings you see such errors as bad luck or a rub-of-the-green. The errors will then have little or no effect on your confidence. This bold-spiritedness is the main aim of this program, what we want in golf and in life.

### **CREATE THE MEMORY OF A FUTURE PEAK PERFORMANCE**

You will probably have had a peak experience in some activity at some point in your life. In Exercise 7, I ask you to recall such an experience when I lead you through a simulated experience. There may not be a memory of a whole peak experience game in your memory bank, but

## DO YOU RECOGNIZE YOURSELF?

*Your practice swing is smooth, relaxed and flowing...  
swing like that and it will be a great shot...  
but as you take the shot your muscles tighten, the swing speeds up and  
the fluidity drains away. The result is a real disappointment.*

### YOU CAN OVERCOME THIS AND MANY OTHER PROBLEMS BY TRAINING YOUR MIND

Discover how easy it is to:

- Focus completely on the shot you are about to make
- Develop positive thoughts and behavior patterns
- Use mental imagery to improve your game
- Achieve active relaxation

Accompanied by a CD of exercises, this book will give you the tools to create peak performance in golf and in other sports you play.



“A must for any golfer serious about improving their game!”

**Lisa ‘Longball’ Vlooswyk, Four time Canadian Long Drive Champion  
and four time World Long Drive Finalist**

“There is no doubt this book will be helpful to golfers... and it is a welcome addition  
to the golf psychology literature.”

**Rich Gordin EdD, Professor, Utah State University**

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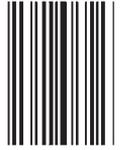
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