

GOLF 101

FOR

BEGINNERS



In case you're waiting for a sign to do it, now is the best time to learn how to play golf. In itself, golf is ideally suited in our current landscape, where social distancing is the new norm. However, with so many rules, so many different kinds of equipment, and so on, the sport can seem terribly daunting to the uninitiated. Our goal with this beginner's guide is to help you hurdle any uncertainty. There are no wrong questions for us. The only dumb ones about getting started to play golf are the queries you're scared to ask.

Without further ado:

All About Golf Clubs and Golf Equipment

While having the right equipment certainly helps, you don't have to spend all your resources just to start playing. You need to focus on finding the sort of equipment that'll let you develop your basic skills with minimal expense. Later on, you'll have plenty of time to equip yourself with the latest products on the market. Suffice to say, learning, not buying, is your top priority at the beginning. Here are some of the few things you need to know:



You only need a few clubs to start

You can carry up to 14 clubs in your bag, but you won't need nearly that many when you first start out. Start with a driver, a putter, and sand wedge (the club with an "S" on the sole & loft of 54-56 degrees). Also, add a 6-iron, an 8-iron, a fairway wood, a pitching wedge, or a hybrid with 18-21 degrees of loft. These are the clubs with the most forgiveness and easiest to get airborne. You may purchase used and new titanium drivers for as low as \$75 and putters for even less online. Most general sporting goods stores also have racks of used clubs at discounted rates.

Take advantage of golf clubs for beginners

Some clubs are more difficult to hit than others. As a beginner, you should stick to hybrids rather than 3-, 4-, and 5-irons. Irons with wider soles effectively reduce the club's tendency to stick in the ground when you hit too far behind the ball. With more weight concentrated in the sole, the iron's center of gravity will be lower, allowing shots to launch on a higher trajectory. Investing in game improvement irons is also a good idea.

Instead of guessing, try before you buy

If you're a complete beginner looking for your first set of clubs, go to a bigger golf shop or driving range and request to try a 6-iron with a regular-flex and a stiff-flex shaft. One of the two should be more manageable to control. Take note since that's the particular shaft flex you should start with for all of your clubs. As you go further into your golf journey, club-fitting will help you get the most out of your equipment.



Learning How to Play

With golf, the most challenging part may as well be learning how to play. Right at the start, it's a great idea to ask yourself why you want to play. If it's for social reasons, then maybe you only require to learn the basics with the help of your friends. But if you're looking to get better fast from a competitive standpoint, you should be looking for top-level instruction.

Also, you need to decide how much you are willing to put into the sport at the onset. We're not just referring to money, but time as well. Remember, there's a significant difference between playing for fun and being a serious player. Before anything else, do some thinking and develop a sound plan. Our pointers when learning how to play are as follows:

Take lessons immediately

Knowing nothing about golf can be a good thing when you're just starting. Most likely, you haven't developed many bad habits, and you have a lot of questions about what to do. Nothing beats getting started in the right direction. Don't make the mistake of seeking help only when you're struggling. It's just as important to understand what you're doing correctly as it is to know what you're doing wrong. Occasionally, your friends may provide a helpful tip for you, but it's best to seek out instruction from a PGA professional. They're the ones who are most qualified to teach the game to players like you.



Pay attention to the basics

At times, golf can drive you to overthink. There's a lot of information to take in from out there, and learning the game can be the most mind-numbing aspect. You can't help but try to grasp everything as a beginner golfer, but too much of it won't help. When you find yourself being burnt out from too much thinking, the most sensible thing to do is get back to basics. Make an effort to get into a great setup — inspect your ball position and posture, then take a relaxed swing towards a full finish.

Find the right teacher

Finding a reliable instructor can significantly speed up your progress. We all want a knowledgeable teacher who is competent and committed to helping us succeed, but finding a good personality fit is equally important. If you're a laid-back individual, you might prefer an instructor who takes a low-key approach. If you're a creative person, you might want to work with someone who teaches through feels and visuals rather than angles and positions.



Getting Ready for the Golf Course

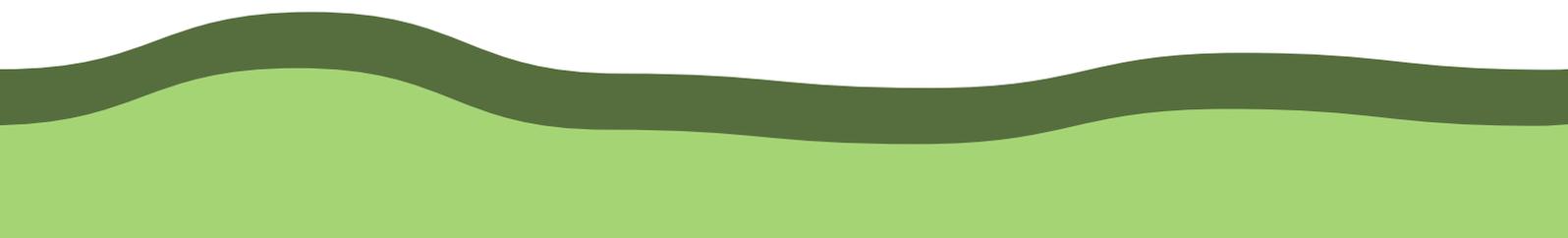
Once you have the needed equipment and have learned the golf swing basics, you'll start thinking about testing what you can do on an actual course. While you have good intentions in mind, it's probably not yet the right time to step into the same course the pros play. Recognizing your limitations will help ensure your early experiences on the golf course are positive ones. The following are the things you should keep in mind:

Start small

Golf is already challenging enough without having to take eight shots just to get the ball to the green. We suggest that you start on a par 3 or "executive" course before moving on to the standard 18-hole championship playground. All of the holes on a par-3 course are par 3s that are usually less than 200 yards long. Executive courses typically have multiple par-3 holes than championship courses, and their par 4s and 5s are shorter. Allow yourself some time to adjust here before taking on a bigger challenge.

Play three holes

Golf is a type of endurance sport in its own right, and you need to work your way up to playing 18 holes. Consider playing three holes of a nine-hole course late in the afternoon, when the course is less crowded and the rates for tee time are more affordable. Courses may not charge a three-hole rate, so simply play until you begin to feel frustrated, then go for another round some other day.



Choose the right course

Don't start playing on courses that will have you discouraged prior to reaching the green for the first time. An excellent course for beginners is level and short, with only a few hazards or forced carries (remember that you have to hit over these waste areas or hazards to get to the fairway). There will be plenty of time to put your skills to the test on more challenging courses, but for now, give yourself a chance to build some positive momentum.

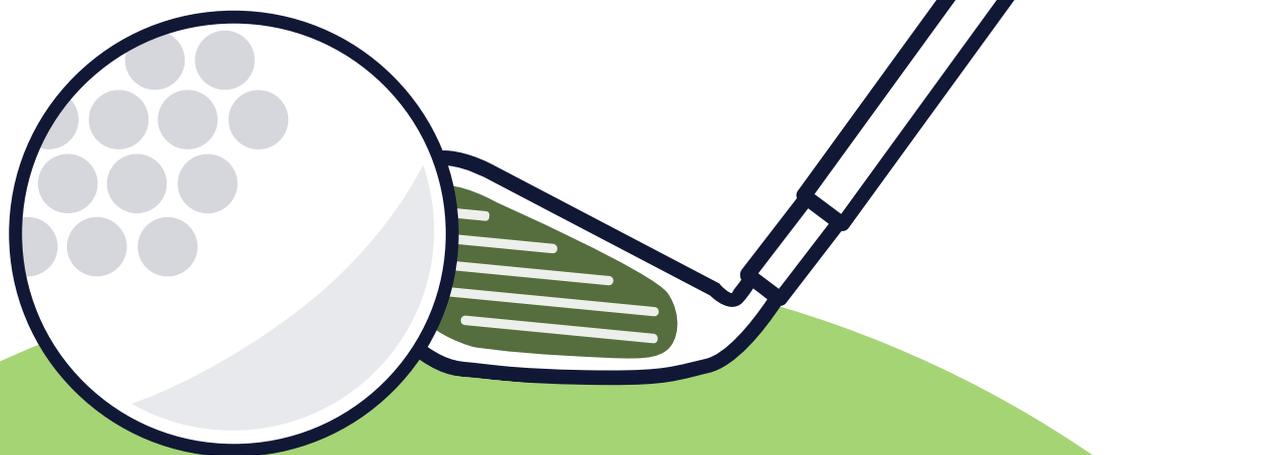
What About Them Golf Rules

It's true, there's no shortage of rules in golf, but you should take comfort in knowing that even expert players don't know them all. If you're heading out to the course for the first time, the most important thing to remember is to be considerate of the people you're playing with, as well as the golf course itself.

It's worth noting that most other players don't mind how good you are as long as you don't disrupt their experience. That means not slowing down the round even if you're struggling, taking care not to interfere with their swing by standing too near or making noise when they're over the ball, and leaving the course in excellent condition for others who will play after you.

GOLF TERMINOLOGIES

- **Golf Tee** — the wooden peg at the start of the hole where you place your golf ball. The area where you first strike the ball at the start of the hole (also known as the tee box).
- **Fairway** — the area in the golf course that leads to the green
- **The green** — the soft and lush ground surrounding the hole
- **The rough** — the area on either side of the fairway that's often filled with trees and overgrown grass
- **Bunker** — the sand-filled ditch that usually surrounds the green
- **Hazard** — basically anything that comes between you and getting the golf ball in the hole, including ponds, bunkers, trees, streams, etc.
- **Stroke** — the swing you make with the intent to hit the ball. You usually keep track of the scores by counting strokes, including missed hits which count as one stroke each.



SCORING:

The scoring system in golf isn't like most sports, where the team or individual with the higher score is declared the winner. In golf, the lower the score (this means taking fewer shots in the round), the better.

Each hole has a nominated par score. Par refers to the number of strokes you require to complete the play of one hole on a golf course. For example, a par -5 hole requires you to hit five shots from the tee box to the cup to achieve a par score. For most 18-hole golf courses, the par score ranges from 70-72 and usually includes par-4 holes. The rest are par-3 or par-5 holes.

Your score is often expressed in terms of the number of strokes over, even with, or under par. For instance, if you shoot a score of 67 on a par-72 course, you're 5 under par or -5. A golfer who shoots an 82 is ten over par, or +10, and the player who scores a 72 is even. Remember that it's better to be under par than going over, but the score may be subjective to your personal goals or the level of competition.



- **Par** —as we mentioned, par is the number of strokes you need to complete a hole in a golf course. The U.S. Golf Association (USGA) provided the following yardage rules for determining a hole's par score:

Par 3 — up to 250 yards (men), up to 210 yards (women)

Par 4 — 251 yards to 470 yards (men), 211 yards to 400 yards (women)

Par 5 — 471 yards to 690 yards (men), 401 yards to 590 yards (women)

- **Ace** — hitting a hole in one. An ace happens when you need only one stroke to get the ball from the tee into the hole.
- **Eagle** — you score an eagle when you complete a hole in two fewer shots than par. Usually, eagles occur on par-4 and par-5 holes.
- **Double Eagle** — also known as albatross. This occurs when you complete a par-5 hole in two shots. You'd have to drive the ball from the tee and, on your second shot, hit the ball into the hole. It's one of the rarest achievements in golf with an estimated 6 million to 1 odds.
- **Birdie** — a birdie is a score that's one stroke less than par. You can achieve a birdie on any hole but usually made on par -4 and par -5 holes. A par -3 hole presents a tougher challenge because it requires you to get the ball into the hole in two shots. (see double eagle)
- **Bogey** — a stroke above par
- **Double Bogey** — 2 strokes above par
- **Triple Bogey** — 3 strokes above par

GOLF EQUIPMENT

Maximum number of golf clubs per bag = 14

Beginner's set: Irons 3, 5, 7, 9, sand iron, 3 wood, and putter

Full Standard Set:

- **Putter**
- **Woods** — 1, 3, 5, or 7 or 9 (alternatively, utility or rescue woods)
- **Irons** — 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, pitching wedge, and sand wedge

Putters are used for putting on the carefully-mown greens. Irons are used on the fairway for a definite distance. They're also used on short holes for teeing off.

Woods are used on the tee boxes for tee shots at the beginning of each hole.



DRESS CODE

Similar to other sports, there's a so-called proper attire when playing golf. This dress code reminds all golfers to observe and maintain proper decorum both on the course and off it. Here's a rundown on the proper golfing attire:

Gentlemen

- ✓ Collared T-shirt (tucked-in, either long or short-sleeved)
- ✓ Casual Trousers or Knee-length sport shorts
- ✓ Proper golf shoes (must be worn at all times)
- ✗ Tank tops, singlets, round-neck t-shirts
- ✗ Tattered jeans, cutoff shorts, tight, cargo drawstring, and denim-material pants
- ✗ Working shoes

Ladies

- ✓ Collared T-shirt (tucked-in, either long or short-sleeved)
- ✓ Proper golf shoes (must be worn at all times)
- ✓ Long pants and knee-length sports shorts
- ✗ Tank tops, halter tops, singlets, roundneck tshirts
- ✗ Tattered jeans, cutoff shorts, tight, cargo drawstring, and denim-material pants
- ✗ Working shoes (Flat or high heel shoes)

You may also check with your respective clubs or golf course management about their policies, as they may vary.

ITEMS YOU SHOULD KEEP IN YOUR GOLF BAG

- Golf clubs
- Golf balls
- Golf tees
- Golf markers
- Divet fixer
- Range finder
- Golf gloves
- Extra golf balls (balls that you don't mind losing)
- Golf shoes (make sure to bring a bag with special pockets that are large enough)
- Extra socks
- Jacket or Rain jacket (depending on the current climate or season)
- Umbrella
- Golf towel
- Sunglasses
- Golf hat and/or hair-tie
- Lip balm
- Snacks (go for dry, packaged energy bars, nuts, dried fruit, or anything that you can count on to supplement the fresh snacks that you prepare)
- Water bottle (It's important to have water in your bag at all times)
- Sunscreen
- Sharpie (for marking balls)
- Pencil (for your scorecard)
- Band-aids & first aid essentials (including antiseptic sprays or ointments)
- Handy-wipes (Individual wet wipes for hands and face)
- Pain pills (it's good to have your pain pills if you're stiff or feeling sore)
- Cash (have a specific amount on-hand)
- Business cards (in case you like to make some new friends)
- Flask
- Face mask
- Hand sanitizer

ITEMS TO PUT IN YOUR GOLF BAG AS YOU LEAVE FOR THE COURSE:

- Battery pack for when your phone dies
- Fresh snacks, like sandwiches, cut-up fruit, boiled eggs, cheese sticks
- Hot and cold beverages (depending on your preference)
- Mobile device (make sure to place it on silent mode)

This checklist of must-have items, nice-to-haves, and last-minute stuff should help you organize your golf bag properly.

As a parting reminder and perhaps the most important one, golf is a competitive game, but at the end of the day, your end goal is supposed to have fun. Don't forget to enjoy yourself and the journey itself. We wish you luck!





LET'S GOLF BETTER

