

SPECIAL REPORT

“How To Take Your Swing From the Drviving Range to the Golf Course”

By Bobby Lopez, PGA Pro at the Richmond



Transferring your perfect consistent driving range warm up swing to the golf course is a typical dilemma and frustration of many a golfer. You're killing it on the range, everything seems perfect. You're convinced that you will have your best round ever and then.....right on the first tee you yank it out of bounds! Some golfers can play well for the first three or four holes, only to loose their rhythm on the fifth hole and throw away a great start. Others play like a dog the first four holes until they finally relax and start to play better. Does this sound like you? If so there's help.

Before anything you need to see your swing through slow motion video analysis with a recognized PGA golf professional. The analysis should reveal any major swing faults in your swing that might be making it difficult for you to control your swing on the golf course. With that said, there is a technique or sequence of events that help a golfer control their swing tempo and emotions on the golf course. Of course nothing in golf is “always”, but if you're doing the right things you'll have your share of success.

First off I like to begin my day with the short game warm up first. Most golf courses are not designed for my kind of warm up. They have the putting green near the first tee and the driving range further away. I bet this is to avoid the noise factor of the driving range for the first tee.

After doing my short game work, (*see my*

special report on short game warm up) I head for the driving range with about 20 minutes to spend. I try to end my last swing with my Driver with just enough time to get to the first tee comfortably, (*make sure it's a good driver shot or hit another one until you do*). I want my last swing to be the first thing I can relate to or remember when I tee it up.

You need to understand that when you hit a good shot, all the mechanics of your swing must have all come together at just the right time or sequence at impact. If that's the case then you need to maintain that same specific rhythm or swing speed you had on the range. Once most golfers get to the golf course, they begin to increase the RPM on their swing. This can effect the synchronization of your swing, resulting in a club face that is out of alignment with the path, or maybe your body out of position from swinging faster and harder or even slower.

At the first tee, picture in your mind that exact swing speed or rhythm you had on the last great tee shot you hit at the range only moments ago. If anything, attempt to swing the golf club a notch or two slower than on the range. Don't over do it....I said a notch or two. Swinging way too slow will have the same poor result as swinging too fast. Remember, having the arms and body out of sync is the problem. Your swing operates at a specific speed where all the parts seem to fall into place. Find your swing speed or rhythm and you got it made.

As the game progresses you may be in further risk of swinging harder or slower. Having a couple of bad holes can affect your swing speed tremendously. Depending on your personality some golfers get angry and

swing harder. That only leads to further damage and a totally lost day.

I use breathing exercises to try and keep myself level minded and level thinking throughout the round. Stay away from coffee, anything with sugar like orange juice, sodas, even diet sodas because of the caffeine. What you eat or drink can greatly effect your swing tempo, rhythm and all around attitude.

When tour players get out of rhythm some of them will narrow their stance and feel like they are swinging with only their arms. The body has less distance to cover in a golf swing and can tend to get ahead of the body. The body can also begin to attack the ball or lean into the shot too early. Narrowing the stance will help you keep your body more steady.

Some players do exactly the opposite! They will widen their stance and swing with their arms. In either case the sought after result is the same. Slow the body down and keep in steady for quite, lets the arms do the tempo. When you're out of rhythm it is usually an over active body that is the culprit.

Once you get through the round then you can decide to work on any swing problems with lessons, video or practice drills. A good drill for lost swing rhythm or an over active body would be the one foot drills and again the feet together drill.

Feet Together Drill: Merely put your feet together and swing easy with only arms for a few balls on the range. Then go back to your stance and see if there is some improvement.

One Foot Drill: Address the ball on only your front foot and use your back foot only for balance by placing only your toe on the ground. Then hit balls with an easy fluid swing maintaining all your weight on your front foot.

Be patient on the golf course. What difference does it make if you bogey the first hole or the last, it's still a bogey. Forget it. Keep playing! Stay within your rhythm and hope for the best. Don't force your game, like a young quarterback trying to force a ball in

coverage and getting intercepted.

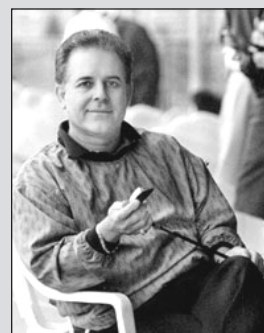
Getting emotional over a bad hole will only make things worse. Ben Hogan was probably the greatest at controlling his emotions on the golf course. Controlling your emotions doesn't mean you can't have fun. Stay relaxed, concentrate on your swing rhythm not your mechanics, (*that's for the driving range*) and enjoy the day.

After having visited Walter Reed hospital for the USO in support of our troops and seeing the tremendous sacrifice our troops make for our freedom makes a bad day at the golf course seem so insignificant. Lets all thank our troops for the sacrifice they make so they we can enjoy golf.

Any questions about this report or anything else related to golf just send an E-mail to bobbylopez@bobbylopezgolf.com.

Bobby Lopez is a PGA professional with 38 years of experience in the golf business.

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