

Positive Mental Imagery



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*Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly
With Mental Coaching*

"I am no longer 'yippping' my putts. I listen to your Putting Tape 4-5 times a week and use my rhythm anchor of super-swish, which helps a lot. Thanks again."

Dr. Leon Leshay, Lake Worth, FL

Distractions on the Golf Course,

by Joan A. King, C.Ht., PNLP

When Jack Nicklaus was walking up the 18th fairway at Augusta on the way to winning his 6th Masters, the thunderous ovation from the crowd brought tears to his eyes he was so touched by the crowd and this historic scene.

He was overcome with emotion. He was distracted. He caught himself in time and remembered that he still had to play out the last hole. He refocused his mind on the task of putting the uphill 50-foot putt.

Distractions such as noises on the golf course are common place. There is also the distraction of your inner voice that brings up thoughts that are irrelevant to your golf game.

Did you ever stand over a putt and think about where you were going for dinner, or some other equally unrelated thought?

If inner voices or outer noises distract you, you have not totally prepared your mind so your body will know what you want it to do. Using a pre-shot routine is a good way to focus your attention.

An excellent step to add to your pre-shot routine is the "D-Line". Looking down the fairway at your target, draw an imaginary line between you and the ball. This is your Decision Line (D-Line).

All thought and decisions about the execution of the shot are to be made before you cross this line and address the ball. You must be absolutely certain of where and how you are going to hit the ball when you cross the D-Line. If you are distracted at any time after

crossing this line, go back and begin your pre-shot routine again to refocus your mind. Keep a mental scorecard with a pass/fail system or a 1-10 system (with 10 being the best and 1 the worst) and record your level of preparedness for every shot. You might be surprised how many shots you hit without being mentally ready.

Bobby Jones said, "The most perfect swing in the world needs direction, and plenty of it, and when it's possessor begins to do a little mental daisy picking, something always goes wrong."

If you have difficulty concentrating over the ball, it may be due to one of the following reasons:

Mental fatigue can play a major role in losing concentration. Some of the signs of mental fatigue are impatience, increased frustration, and disappointment with normal situations, less ability to visualize, and reduced motivation and enjoyment.

If you are too tense physically and mentally, you are too aware of things such as perceived trouble and outside distractions, Tai Chi and Yoga are excellent ways to learn to relax and focus inward. On the golf course, use the relaxation technique of deep breathing to slow down your thinking processes. Players who are too involved with correcting, finding, or improving their swing, need to become more focused by using their skills of visualization, awareness of the target, tempo, feel and touch. Negative attitudes about yourself and the way that you see the golf course can put you into a state of anxiety.

If you are too tense physically and mentally, you are too aware of things such as perceived trouble and outside distractions. To perform optimally in your golf game and in your personal and professional lives, it is essential to be as relaxed as possible. Over-stimulation results in stress and a decrease in the ability to concentrate and focus. People make more mistakes when they are tense and over stressed. Stress is like white noise that causes changes in our electrical system.

You can practice the mental skill of clearing your mind of distracting or negative thoughts by consistently once or twice a day eliminating all stimulation and excitement around and inside of you. Go to a place in solitude where there is no TV, no telephone, no noise, no computer, and no activity such as driving your car. There are many ways to quiet the mind and body. Tai Chi, Yoga, self-hypnosis, slow, deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, and meditation are excellent ways to learn to relax and focus inward where there is no distraction.

There are different ways to focus during a round of golf. Ben Hogan, for example, concentrated on his round by not thinking or talking about anything else. If you find that you lose your focus during the round, it might be better to relax your concentration between shots. Joke with your partners, and then focus only when it is your turn to hit.

A mind that is busy, restless, or indecisive will find it difficult to concentrate on one activity. The first step toward improved concentration is to quiet your mind. When it's your turn to hit, "turn on" your focus by going into your pre-shot routine to keep your mind from wandering. Begin by breathing to relax. Be decisive about your club selection. Mentally rehearse the shot, using positive images. Trust that you will hit the

shot that you have imagined.

For most people, concentration repeatedly shifts from outside yourself between shots to inside yourself during shots. Being engrossed in the process of performing a shot is known as being in the "flow" or "zone state" where peak performances occur.

At what distance is fear a distraction to make you think about missing a putt? Four feet? Five feet? Focus your attention by using imagery "to see" yourself with a new attitude about enjoying these length putts. Take a few minutes every day to visualize yourself with this new attitude, successfully stroking the ball into the cup over and over. Then imagine yourself successfully stroking that length putt in a match where you need to make it.

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If you need help with your mental game or have a question, email Joan at Positive Mental Imagery, info@mastermindgolf.com . Please share with us how this website information has helped you improve your golf performance.

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