

POSITIVE MENTAL IMAGERY

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

GOLF COURSE MANAGEMENT by Joan King

Do you have a presupposition about the toughness of the golf course you are going to play? Are you visually intimidated by the many water holes, fairway bunkers, tree lined fairways, mounds, railroad ties, tiered or severely undulating greens? Intimidation can lead to indecision, which will most likely result in a missed shot.

Have you looked at a sprinkler head and then said, "It looks farther than that (yardage)." Golf course architects can create indecision in your mind by the way they sculpture the golf course. For instance, a green surrounded by tall trees will look closer than it actually is. Donald Ross was famous for building bunkers with a raised front lip 20 yards in front of the greens so they look like they are greenside bunkers. He created an illusion so you would begin to doubt the yardage to the pin.

When an architect designs a par 5 hole that is reachable in two and looks like an easy birdie and possibly an eagle, your mind defines it as a 4 on your scorecard. If you go for the green, wind up in the bunker, and make bogie, you are deflated and have let the golf course beat you. If you lay up to your favorite approach distance and hit it close to make the birdie putt, you have used good course management. You have then outsmarted the golf course and feel satisfied.

A good mental game includes good course management. Course management is the ability to play around the golf course the way it was designed by the architect, avoiding the trouble and placing each shot in the best position to hit the next shot.

The golf course is set up so you will make hundreds of decisions. Course management is *smart* golf; thinking positively to avoid mistakes. The game of golf is about managing imperfection. Golf is about managing

yourself around the golf course without letting your ego take over (Tin Cup experience).

When you change the way you see the world, your world changes! When you change the way you see the golf course you can see opportunities. You see the obstacles and make plans to avoid them.

Your course management depends upon a myriad of things including your skill level, your personality, course conditions and the pressure of the situation. It is important to have a strategy for playing each hole so you will be prepared ahead of time to handle the feelings that might arise to deter you.

You have learned from experience how to manage your own golf course well because you know your plan. You don't have to do so much analytical thinking and can concentrate on creating the shots you want.

You can be a genius at course management if you are confident with your wedges and putter. Then it won't matter if you miss greens.

“Positive thinking is working for something and believing that it will happen. Wishful thinking is waiting for something and hoping it will happen.” –Joe Tye

Here are some tips for good course management:

1. Have a game plan.

- Plan your strategy according to your ability. Less than 1% of all golfers have shot an even par round of golf or better. Measuring your performance against par is a set-up for failure for the average golfer. Decide which holes you can par and which you can bogie, etc. and set your own par on each hole.
- In a match play tournament, play your own game and play the golf course, not your opponent.
- In a scramble where you have three partners, you will probably want to swing all out, unless at least one other ball is not in a good position.
- In a stroke play tournament, you will want to play consistently and perhaps conservatively.
- On a team playing for one best ball, you might want to think about the best ways to make birdies.

2. Use the same pre-shot routine on every shot. You will have more consistent results if your routine is consistent. Then your brain will know exactly what you want to do.

3. **Be positive. Be decisive.** Indecision is the enemy of golfers. There are many ways to be indecisive, not just in club selection. Make a mental blueprint of your path to the hole. Decide on a specific target area for each shot and aim at it. Believe in your ability to hit it there!
4. **Eliminate tension.** If too many thoughts are going on in your mind, you become tense. Make up your mind where and how you are going to hit the shot and just do it! When you get over the ball, all of your thoughts and emotions should be on the ball and where you are going to hit it. And just do it! A little anxiety is all right because the desire will get you slightly aroused and anxious to play.
5. **Golf is a game of managing your misses.** If you hit five to seven shots per round just the way you want, that is a great achievement. The rest of your shots should be playable, or good misses. Don't dwell on a bad shot; concentrate on the shot at hand and stay focused. Then you can turn it around quickly.
6. **Aim for the side of the fairway that *opens up* the approach to the green.**
7. **Check the pin placement to determine how aggressively to hit to the green.** There are usually six "sucker" pins, six easy pins and six medium pin placements. Hit to the pin when it is in the middle of the green. When there are "sucker" pin placements tucked behind the bunker or on a shallow part of the green, hit to the middle. Take enough club to hit over the greenside bunkers.
8. **Put approach shots below the hole on a course with fast, undulating greens.**
9. **Take the shortest route out of trouble to avoid multiple errors.** Trouble means trees, unplayable lie, deep bunkers, deep rough, severe stance, bare or wet ground, out of bounds.
10. **On long putts, think distance.** To avoid 3-putts, think 95% distance and 5% direction. Putt the ball to a three-foot circle around the hole.
11. **Short par fours usually have subtle trouble.** Use less than a driver for position play. Hit your tee shot to a full shot distance into the green.
12. **On short approach shots go for the flag.** Divide the green into thirds or quarters and get the ball into the right segment for the best chance at a one-putt..

13. **On long approach shots, aim for the center of the green.** Take enough club to carry over the greenside bunkers.
14. **Carefully balance what you are risking against the reward.** When you plan your shot, allow for a margin of error. Play the percentages. Make up your mind before you use your muscles. If you miss the shot, make sure you can recover.
15. **Know your best *lay-up* distance.** Know when, and how to lay up. Don't try to hit it as close to the green as possible leaving a three-quarter wedge shot. Leave 80 to 100 yards to make a full swing.
16. **Look to see where the trouble is.** Then turn your attention to where you want the ball to go. If your last look or thought is the trouble, there's a good chance that is where your ball will end up.
17. **Be prepared for bad shots and bad breaks.** Let go of bad shots and bad breaks as they are over and done. Stay confident and focused to hit the next shot.
18. **Be flexible with your game plan when it is windy/raining.** Have a positive attitude that the conditions are the same for everyone, and you will play better than they do.
19. **Look at the clouds when you are throwing up grass.** Trees may surround you. Looking at the clouds will give you an indication of how strong the wind is.
20. **Make sure you get the ball *out* of a fairway bunker.** Look at the lip of the bunker and make sure you have a club with enough loft to get over the lip. Make sure you hit it clean, not fat. Take one more club to make up for no body movement. Pick the ball out.
21. **If your shot is half way between clubs,** use the longer club and choke down an inch or so.
22. **Master one approach shot so you can play it under pressure.** Choose one approach shot you are comfortable with; pitch and run, chip shot, lob shot, etc. Don't try and execute a shot you don't know how to hit or have any confidence in.
23. **Use the putter from off the green for highest percentage shot.** Most people think their worst putt is as good as their best chip shot. If you putt to four feet you think you have hit a poor putt, but if you chip to four feet, it feels good. Play every shot you can with the putter just to get it close enough for a one putt.

24. **When in trouble, maintain your equilibrium.** Take your time to figure out all your options, what the percentage shot is, what you have confidence doing and carefully exercise your preshot routine.
25. **Manage your downtime.** Since playing the ball only takes about 10 minutes in a four-hour round, decide how you will spend the time between shots to keep yourself in a positive frame of mind, loose and relaxed.
26. **Stick to your game plan.** If you are behind, don't press and try harder. Be patient. Make up your mind that everything happened to help you.
27. **Plan to finish well.** Most tournaments are won on the last three holes. Play your game. Let your opponents match your performance.

**GOLF IS A GAME TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO MANEUVER THE BALL
AROUND THE COURSE AND HAVE FUN DOING IT!**

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance!

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“Thanks for your help. The best thing you have done for me is that I can't wait for the next round. Your “Fearless Golf” tape helps me to relax and stay in control of myself on the course. I listen to you every night as I sleep.” --- KP, United America Senior Pro Tour

“After one session with you I have had a significant improvement in my golf game. I had my best round! I am scoring more consistently, have better concentration, less tension, and am having lots of fun!!!! --- PF, Senior Amateur

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