

POSITIVE MENTAL IMAGERY

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*Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly*

VISUALIZATION

By Joan King

Using your senses is an important part of learning the game of golf easily, and performing well. From the time we were born we have accessed information through our five senses; seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling. In our DNA we each have been given a preferred sense of learning which then gets enhanced as we use it constantly.

It was obvious to me which sensory mode was preferred by my grandchildren as infants. The auditory learners were easily distracted by noises such as airplanes. The kinesthetic/feeling learners were the ones who like to cuddle and touch soft objects. The visual ones focus in on sights rather than sounds.

Everyone uses all five senses almost all of the time. But since we prefer one over the other, using that one makes it easier to produce a mental image. A musician is someone who uses his auditory sense, a massage therapist uses his touch sense, and chefs use their taste sense. This dominant sense is the one which interprets information, understands instruction, and helps you perform the easiest way.

Golfers often complain to me that they can't "see the line" on the green, or visualize what the shot is going to look like. Forcing yourself to do this when you are an auditory or feel player, removes you from accessing your primary sense. Sometimes golfers who have trouble visualizing, look at the target and try to hold on to that image while they are swinging the club. This serves as a distraction to the process of preparing for the shot.

The same internal disorganization happens when taking a golf lesson and you are trying to "see" the swing when the instructor is talking in terms of "feeling" the shot. What do you think is the easiest way for you to understand the instruction? Is it easiest for you to model the image when you see the swing, access the rhythm of the swing, or by feeling the club, ball and ground?

See the Target

In almost every other sport, the athlete looks at the target. In the process of aiming and swinging the golf club, it is important to know where the target is. For a visual golfer, when you are over the ball, the image of the target can be sensed in your mind's eye easily without effort.

See the Shot

You probably have experienced "seeing" a shot in your mind, and then stepping up and executing it perfectly. Your mind holds the blueprint of the shot and automatically sends a message to your muscles about what you want. You can either bring up a past good shot that you have anchored into your memory bank, or a shot that you have practiced, or you can create a shot with your imagination.

If you want to hit a draw, you have lots of images in your memory bank that picture movement in that direction. All you have to do is imagine an airplane taking off and banking left, or a highway off-ramp that veers to the left. By relaxing and bringing up that image, your muscles will react automatically and produce the draw.

Create Visual Images

Look at the golf situation with your conscious mind and decide on the club to use. Then use your subconscious memory bank to create visual images.

If you need to hit a low, punch shot into the wind, visualize a time when you had to hit a low shot under some overhanging tree branches. To hit your driver straighter, visualize hitting down the aisle at a grocery store. If you have trouble defining your landing area, visualize a soccer net or football goal posts. When playing in front of crowds of people, visualize the people as immovable trees to eliminate any fear of a wayward shot. The classic image is of hitting a soft wedge into the green to land it "like a butterfly with sore feet."

Visualize the green as a dart board or archery target, and aim at the red bulls-eye in the center. If you have trouble "seeing" the line on the green, place an imaginary white strip that you see on the highway in front of your ball curving to the hole. Coincidentally the width of this strip is about the same as the length of your putter, making it easy to stroke your putter along this imaginary line.

Practice Trusting Your Image

Golfers spend enumerable hours on the practice range developing a repeatable swing. Missing from most golfers' practice sessions is the time spent trusting that what they have learned will work without conscious thought. Conscious thought about any part of the swing will result in overcontrolling and steering the shot.

Spend 60% of your time on the practice range trusting your swing and images without any conscious thought about “how” to do it. If you don’t do this, you will find yourself still experimenting and hitting practice shots on the golf course.

Creating a good picture of a shot you want to play will also keep negative thoughts out of your mind. Visualizing the shot, and seeing where it will land will keep you in a positive frame of mind.

Modeling Good Swings

Have you noticed how well you swing after you have watched a Professional Tour event? This is another form of visualization. Your eyes take into your mind the image of the tempo and pace of the pros and form a mental image that shows up in your game the next day.

Since you probably don’t follow the Tours every week to reinforce the images, you can use videos of good golfers to establish the easy, fluid rhythm in your mind and muscles. This is illustrated in the SyberVision videos that show the perfect swing of a professional golfer over and over from different angles. When you watch the video, it is important that you don’t attempt to analyze the movements of the swing. Allow your mind to absorb an overall swing image.

The best way to create the swing you want is to reinforce the positive rather than always trying to fix what is wrong.

Preparing for a Match

Use visualization before a match or tournament by playing the golf course in your mind, hitting every shot according to your strategy. Watch yourself as if you are the observer noticing what you are thinking and doing. Pay particular attention to your preshot routine to see that it is the same every time. Add positive self-talk and affirmations to enhance your images.

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance!

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