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Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly



Play “In the Zone” with Joan

DEEP BREATHING

Approaching the holiday season, we have a choice to embrace the spiritual qualities of thankfulness, gratitude, sharing, and joy into our every day lives, or to succumb to the stressors paraded before us daily.

Thanksgiving is a time to celebrate our gratitude. It is a time of giving thanks for our abundance. As golfers, we can leave the perceived chaos of the world, and go to the golf course to enjoy the peacefulness and serenity of a playground that has been designed for our pleasure. If it is too cold or snowy where you are, you can close your eyes and use your imagination to play on a course of your choosing. By imaging, your body will react as if you are playing. You can experience Zone golf of being in the moment. Your physical body will respond accordingly, bringing you relaxation and calm.

How do you do that when there are so many life problems to encounter and solve? Guided imagery is a natural and powerful technique that focuses and directs your imagination to what you want to happen. It encompasses all of your senses and emotions, involving the whole body. Research has proved its effectiveness in improving health, creativity and performance. You can invent your own imagery or listen to the PMI CDs (www.pmi4.com/cart) that have been created for relaxation and success in your golf game.

Relaxation and Focus

The key to relaxation and focus is deep breathing. When we are frustrated or angry, most people breathe in, tense their bodies and hold their breath. When there is tension, the body cannot move smoothly and efficiently. Tension can cause a variety of swing problems including poor clubhead speed, incorrect swing path and faulty clubface alignment at impact. Instead of producing a smooth, effortless, easy swing, the golfer then experiences a lot of effort producing a jerky, hard swing.

Deep breathing used in sports, yoga, meditation, improving health, and reducing pain is the normal, natural process of breathing done at a deeper level. The average adult breathes with the top half of their lungs. Breathing from the chest is our natural response to a situation where we need to defend ourselves or take flight. By moving our ribs up and out, we create the maximum amount of room in the chest for our lungs to expand. Breathing this way can make us nervous because it activates our emergency response system.

Breathing high in the chest causes tension and tightness in the upper body, restricting the backswing. When these shoulder muscles are loose and relaxed there is less tension. Less tension creates greater club head speed. Greater clubhead speed creates more distance. When you hold your breath, you restrict the momentum you have created with your backswing.

Your breathing is a good indicator of your feelings and thinking patterns. Proper breathing can relieve stress-related symptoms such as performance anxiety. It is important to keep your breathing even for consistent golf.

Pay attention to how you breathe. If your abdominal area is not filling up with air, you are not breathing the most efficient way for your mental, emotional and physical health. The best examples of proper breathing are infants who naturally breathe from the diaphragm, the muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdomen. The air comes in through the nose, is pulled down to the abdomen, the abdomen expands with the inhalation, and on the exhalation the abdominal area collapses as the air is forced back out through the nose.

Deep Breathing Technique

1. Lay your hands on your abdomen with your fingers touching.
2. Breathe in to the count of four.
3. As you inhale, feel your abdomen expand outward and your fingers separate.
4. Hold your breath for the count of four.
5. As you exhale completely to the count of eight, feel your abdomen collapse as your fingers touch.

You will notice that the longer you practice this exercise, the slower your heart will beat. To move into the “zone state” for greater focus, it is necessary to slow down your brain wave and heart wave activity. You may also notice that your entire body will begin to relax. Relaxed muscles produce unhurried, smooth, effortless, powerful golf swings.

Breathing through the diaphragm/abdomen is the normal, natural way to breathe. To notice the difference, pay attention to your breathing patterns when you are relaxed while sitting or lying down watching TV. Or watch a baby sleeping and see their stomachs rise as they inhale.

Breathing in deep, long breaths sends the incoming oxygen to every part of the body, refreshing and relaxing every cell. Whenever you want to focus in the moment, take several long, deep breaths. Now is the only time we have. Use deep breathing to experience the joy of the moment by releasing all perceived stress and anxiety as you exhale.

Gratitude

For each and every one of you that has used this newsletter and/or website to enrich your life or your golf performances, we extend our thanks and appreciation for helping to fulfill the PMI vision. May this Thanksgiving be a time for you to reflect and be grateful for the beautiful gifts you already have.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance

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One on One: Call 561-747-7276 or contact [Joan](#) today to ask about personal coaching in person or by phone. Learn what is missing in your game to achieve your peak performances.

If this monthly mental instruction newsletter has been helpful to you, please forward it to your friends so they can have more fun playing the game of golf while lowering their scores. Download previous PMI newsletter issues by logging on at www.mastermindgolf.com

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.