

# Golf Guide



# Correcting Slice While Driving

**Y**our first shot from the tee box can set the pace for your entire game. If you can't position yourself for success during your initial drive, it will cost you swings that affect your overall score.

According to Golf Digest, about 90 percent of golfers struggle with slicing the ball. Don't get discouraged. It's easy to fix.

A slice (when the ball curves right) occurs when the club mates with the side of a golf ball during the swing. This causes an abnormal spin which sends you way off course of a target.

A few major culprits that contribute to a slice include trying to overpower the ball, poor wrist rotation and an improper stance.

The next time you hit the links, remember these tips from the pros at Golf Digest to drive your ball straight – every time.

## IT'S ALL IN THE GRIP

If you're not holding your club properly, a slice is almost inevitable. Try to strengthen your grip by holding your hands away from the target, while keeping palms parallel with each other.

Analyze your position to



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ensure the base of your thumbs line up with the point of the right-side collar of your shirt.

It's also important to not squeeze the club with too much pressure, as it will keep your hands from releasing during impact.

## THE PERFECT SWING

Bad habits are hard to break on the golf course, especially

during your initial drive. Usually, a lesson with a professional will prove to be incredibly helpful when trying to cure a slice. Before your lesson, become familiar with the perfect stance and swing that make balls fly straight.

### Position the ball for success.

A common reason for slicing occurs before you even swing. Try to move the ball further

back in your stance and line it up just inside your left heel.

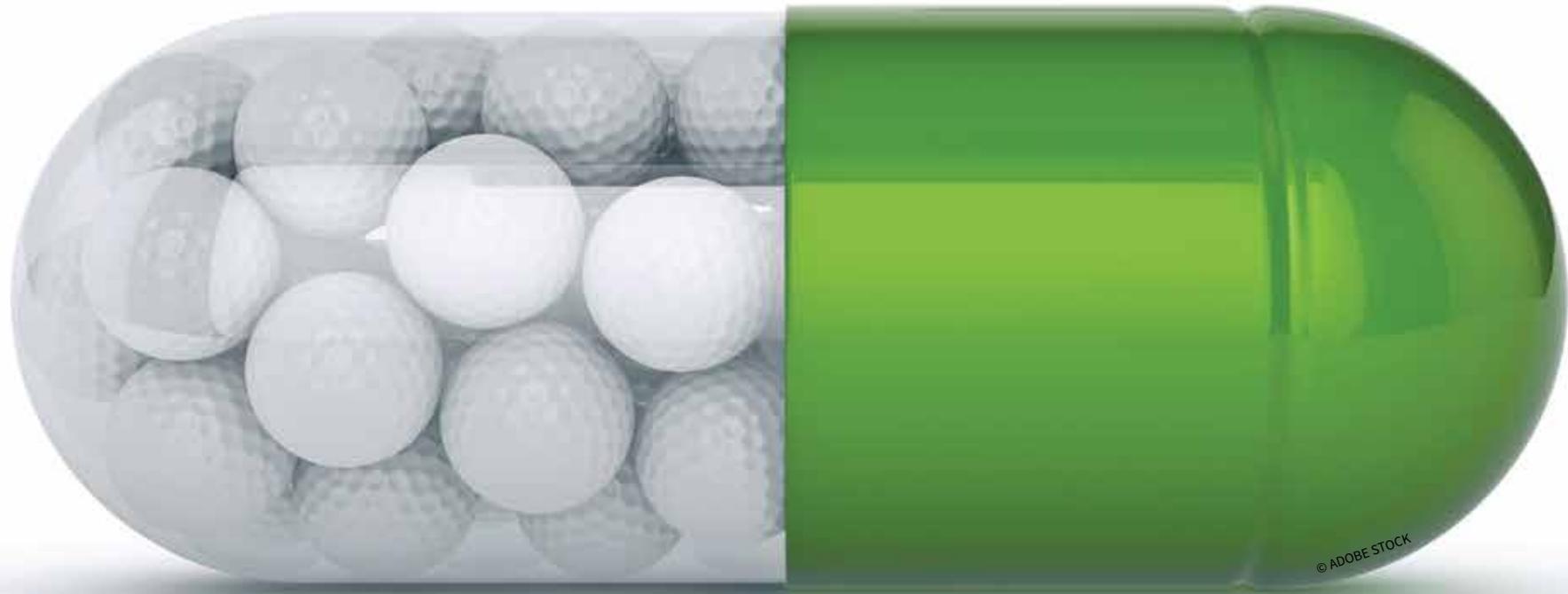
**Fix your backswing.** Keep your right elbow close to your body during the backswing. This will make your club follow the proper path on the downswing.

### Time your forearm release.

During every swing, there is a point when you will rotate your dominant hand, wrist and arm

across your body. A slice occurs when this breaking point is timed too late. You can find your sweet spot by practicing a swing and releasing your club when you feel the rotation point.

The goal is for your club to travel straight and toward the target. Make sure to practice this in a wide-open space with no people present.



# Health Benefits of Golf

**Y**ou may underestimate the amazing health benefits you gain every time you step out on the links. From improving your state of mind to increasing your physical fitness, a day on the course provides advantages for your overall health.

If you have ever felt guilty when stepping away from your hectic schedule to enjoy a round of golf – stop.

## **SKIP THE CART FOR CARDIO**

According to the American Heart Association, walking briskly can lower

your risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes.

A recent study reported by the World Golf Foundation shows that walking three 18-hole rounds per week will provide enough exercise for weight maintenance for all ages.

In addition to your current physical fitness routines, mix in a few rounds of golf to add enjoyment to your workout.

Check out these other facts the WGF found during its review:

- Playing 18 holes and riding in a cart will account for 1,300 calories burned, whereas walking the same 18 holes and carrying your clubs will burn an average of 2,000 calories.

- Walking the average 18-hole course equals a 5-mile hike and will generally meet the 10,000 steps-per-day guideline, recommended by many physi-

cians.

- The exercise intensity and amount of energy used to play nine holes equals about 40 minutes of lawn mowing for adult men.

The next time someone gives you a hard time about spending too much time on the links, don't be afraid to teach them one of these fascinating statistics.

## **BOOST YOUR MOOD**

The National Institutes of Health states there is limited evidence related to golf and mental health. However, it does report that the physical activity required has a direct effect on mental well-being.

According to the American Psychological Association, exercise is not only beneficial to short-term men-

tal health; research has shown that it can even alleviate long-term depression.

It also is tied to improving issues such as high-blood pressure, diabetes and arthritis. This is largely due to pleasant endorphins being released throughout your body while you're active.

## **BE PART OF A SOCIAL CIRCLE**

While a game of golf can certainly be relaxing while playing solo, it also should be enjoyed amongst a group of enthusiasts. Take advantage of scrambles or other events in which players are encouraged to team up and compete.

The NIH states that being social helps behavioral, psychosocial and physiological health.

# Choosing a Golf Instructor

Whether you are just beginning the journey of becoming a golfer or are a seasoned veteran looking to sharpen your skills, a professional instructor can make a huge difference.

Scheduling a lesson with a professional will alleviate questions you have about the game and areas in which you struggle.

However, when choosing the perfect instructor for your game, it's important to research a few different options. For instance, if you consider yourself a beginner, taking advice from a professional who specializes in advanced lessons might leave you scratching your head.

It's easy to find the teacher who will be most beneficial to your game right in your local area.

## COMFORTABILITY

Being comfortable around your instructor is important to the impact of the lessons. Schedule an initial meeting before choosing a start date.

Follow these tips from the Professional Golfers Association before determining whether the instructor is the best fit.

- Be sure your personality type, mutual goals and beliefs about the game of golf are similar.

- Ask how much time your instructor has available for your individual needs. Will she be available for instant feedback and interaction, or

will you need to schedule a follow-up session?

- Check his credentials and education to ensure he is experienced enough to provide you with the results you want.

## FIND A LICENSED INSTRUCTOR

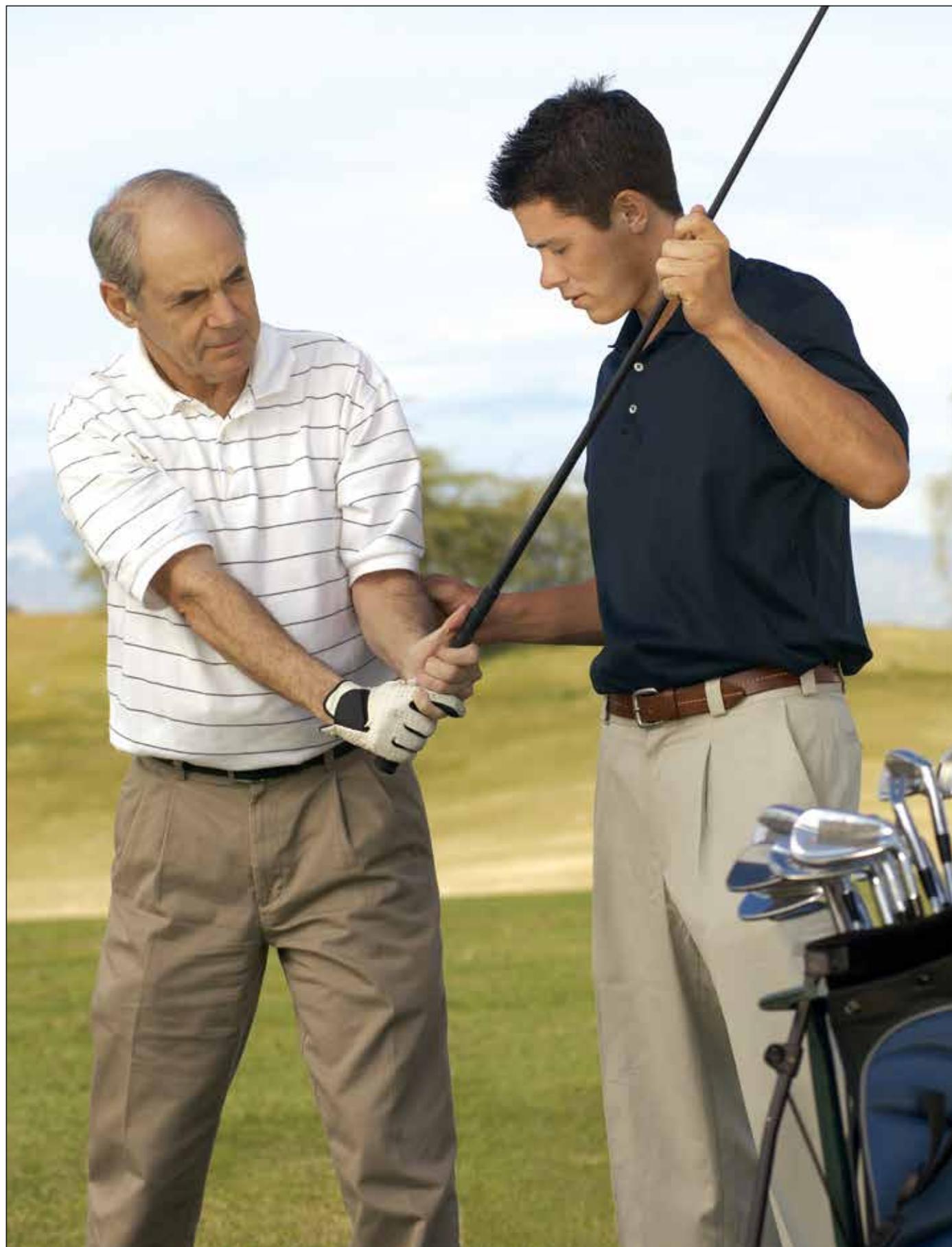
To receive the most beneficial lessons, make sure your professional instructor is an accredited member of the PGA or LPGA. To become licensed, these experts must complete intense programs and are required to re-educate themselves on a regular basis.

Taking advice from a self-proclaimed expert who hasn't received proper training can have a negative impact on your golf game.

## ASK FOR REFERENCES

Another important factor to consider is how former clients of a potential instructor enjoyed their lessons. In addition to asking for professional references, ask for contact information of past students.

This is an easy way to gauge an instructor's level of patience, professionalism and the overall outcome of how effective their methods are.



# Benefits of Junior Golf

**A**thletic programs have great effects on the growth and development of our youth. Encouraging your children to spend their energy on the golf course can create a lifetime hobby or even a professional career.

When sharing your passion for hitting the links with the children in your life, you'll instill important values such as sportsmanship, physical fitness and self-confidence. The golf course is a great place for positive parent/child interactions, as your young one will likely look to you for advice on a swing that didn't go quite right.

Aside from spending quality time together and creating life-long memories, here are other great reasons to encourage your child to participate at the course, per the Professional Golf Association.

## SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS

With all the incredible technology and gadgets available today, it can be easy for youth to forget about the great outdoors. Spending time on the links will introduce them to beautiful views and wildlife and promote healthy exercise habits.

It also can be an awesome



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way to get the entire family involved, allowing parents to provide positive feedback and encouragement to their children.

## LEARNING ABOUT SPORTSMANSHIP

The game of golf teaches youth about dealing with disappointment and celebrating achievements. Just like in everyday life, there are many

ups and downs. Learning how to react while golfing will set the foundation for handling real-life situations.

A few of the biggest lessons they can expect are learning from mistakes and how to overcome obstacles. With patience and practice, you will notice your child is able to better control his emotions while golfing and experiencing day-to-day life.

## DIVERSE SOCIAL CIRCLE

There is no age limit for golfers, making it easy for your children to be exposed to many different age groups while golfing. Life-long friendships are made on the golf course.

You can encourage your child to join a team or event with people of different cultures to give them a glance of the different people who make up the world. Becoming com-

fortable with people with different beliefs, customs and lifestyles will teach your children about the importance of acceptance.

## IT'S FUN

No video game or smart-phone app can replace the entertainment value of a day on the course. Disconnect from busy schedules and spend a day golfing.

# Top United States Courses

Since 1966, Golf Digest has ranked the most stellar greens in the nation with its annual America's 100 Greatest Golf Courses list. The top three contenders offer gorgeous views, incredible layouts and challenging hazards.

Take a look at courses that topped the list for 2017-2018:

### 3. Cypress Point Club, Pebble Beach

This illustrious club takes golfers on a tour of amazing-sand dunes, wooded areas and beautiful coasts. The semi-private club opens to the public by invitation or limited reservations.

If you are lucky enough to venture out to the Cypress Point Club, the themes of the course will stun you.

Holes one through six will invite you to beautiful-wooded areas, provided by amazing cypress and pine trees, which also act as obstacles.

Make sure your sand wedge is available for the next seven holes, laid out among natural sand dunes. The final five holes take golfers on a seaside adventure that will test even the most experienced players.

Initially developed in 1928,



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the course has seen many renovations yet stays true to its original architecture. When playing this historic course, you'll be up against a par 72 and 6,524 yards.

### 2. Augusta National Golf Club, Augusta Ga.

Hosting the annual Masters Tournament requires the Augusta National Golf Club to constantly update features on the course.

Built in 1933 by Alister Mackenzie & Bobby Jones, the historic location has received updates in the way of water hazards, extensive tree planting and an increase in mounds and swales.

If you get the chance to walk on the same course that has hosted the biggest names in the game, you'll notice incredible fairways with minimal rough, tricky water shots and deep bunkers scattered

throughout the course. The course has a par 72 and 7,435 yards to challenge even the most advanced golfers.

### 1. Pine Valley Golf Club, Pine Valley, NJ

The course is often regarded the hardest and best golf course in the world, with good reason. Relentless bunkers seem to come out of nowhere, and missing a shot at the fairway can leave you scrambling

for par.

This is a place where every shot must be well executed and thought out. It certainly is a course that exceeds the hype and expectations around it.

If you are an elite amateur golfer, the club typically opens its doors to the public in September for the annual Crump Cup. Start practicing now to receive an invite to witness this breathtaking course in person.

# Get the Most out of your Hybrid

In the late 1990s, hybrid clubs were introduced to promote higher and more accurate shots.

While certain circumstances are best left to a traditional iron, a hybrid certainly has its place in every golf bag.

Like regular irons, hybrid clubs are numbered to signify the distance it can carry a ball. While the true number will vary from golfers with different experience levels, the LPGA estimates these numbers for the ranges each one can achieve.

- 3-hybrid: men, 170-220 yards; women, 125-180.

- 4-hybrid: men, 160-210 yards; women: 120-170.

- 5-hybrid: men: 150-200 yards; women: 115-160.

The Professional Golf Association suggests a hybrid club will move a ball about 5 to 8 yards farther than a regular iron. While that might seem like a small number, it can make the difference in setting up a perfect putt or chip shot.

## IMPROVE ACCURACY

The larger head on a hybrid club gives golfers more room for error, helping improve accuracy if the shot is a little off. While taking shots from the fairway, casual golfers will find it easier to set themselves up for success.

For the best accuracy, it's important to use your iron



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stance rather than how you would swing with a wood. Set up with the ball in mid stance and swing down toward the ball, making a divot just beyond its position.

Hybrid-tee shots should be set up lower than usual. Make

sure to leave no more than a quarter of the ball above the club's head level. When teeing off, use the same swing as one with a fairway wood — level and sweeping, not the up-swinging motion used with a driver.

## HYBRID VS. IRON SITUATIONS

Since a hybrid club provides a deeper center of gravity, they make it much easier to send a ball high in the air with little spin. You'll see the most success when using these as

approach shots when you are in reach of the green.

Traditional irons keep the trajectory low, which gives your ball a chance to travel further once it lands. They are ideal for second shots on a par 5 when you need the extra help.

# Basics for Beginners

While spectating on television or in person, it's easy to get the impression that it's easy to excel at golf.

The professionals you watch drive the ball with swings that look effortless, sink holes with long-distance putts and overcome hazards with ease. In reality, each shot has been refined by years of mistakes, overcoming obstacles and dedicated practice.

Golf is not a game you can just jump in to and expect to succeed.

## WHAT'S IN YOUR BAG?

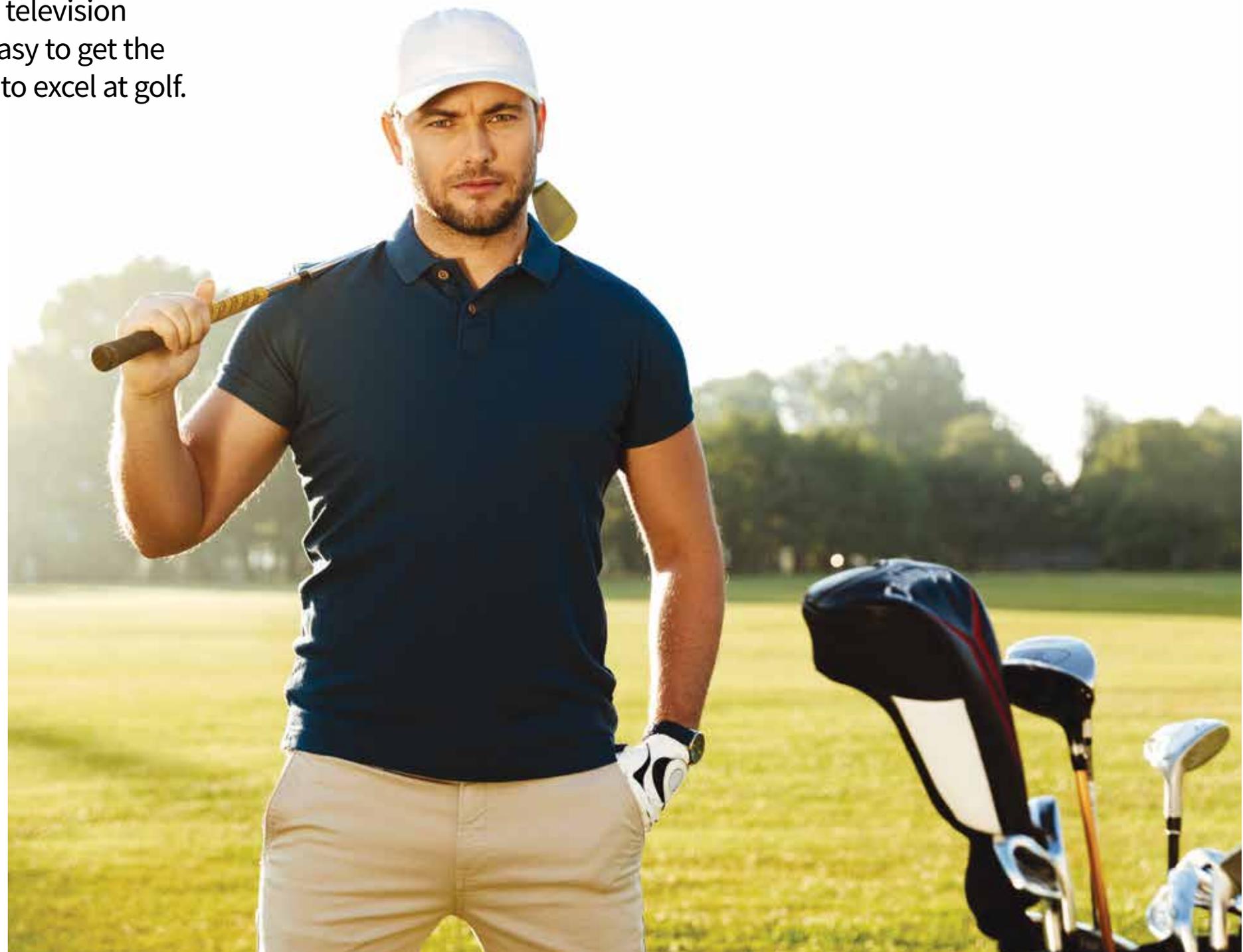
You can spend a small fortune on a quality set of clubs, but without understanding how to use them, their promise will go unrealized. When you're just getting started, it's best to keep it simple. Invest in an affordable set and make learning the priority, not buying the latest and greatest.

Professional rules state that golfers can carry up to 14 clubs in their bags. However, as a beginner, there are only a few types of equipment you will really need.

Make sure to pack a driver, putter, sand wedge, fairway wood, a few irons and the ever-important pitching wedge. These clubs are most forgiving to an amateur swing while providing the most air.

## LESSONS MATTER

Sure, while golfing with a group of seasoned veterans, they will be willing to give you



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advice as you get started.

The problem with this is each one might have a different swing or style that works for them. The best way to learn is by taking lessons from a PGA-accredited instructor. Once you learn the basics, it

will be easier to tweak your game to find what works best for you.

## PRACTICE MAKE PERFECT

Even if you can't find the time to practice at the golf course, you can always work on

your swing in your own backyard. Your neighbors might not appreciate you driving balls if you live in a busy community, but you should still perfect your stance with ghost swings.

There also are great tools to use while practicing at home.

Invest in a chipping net to get a feel for your short game or create a small putting green with slopes and other obstacles you struggle with on the course.

In due time, you will be a hero on the course, giving advice to those just beginning.