

Golf Guide



Golf-Course Etiquette

Like any other sport, golf has its rules — but there are also unwritten guidelines and traditional courtesies involved with the game.

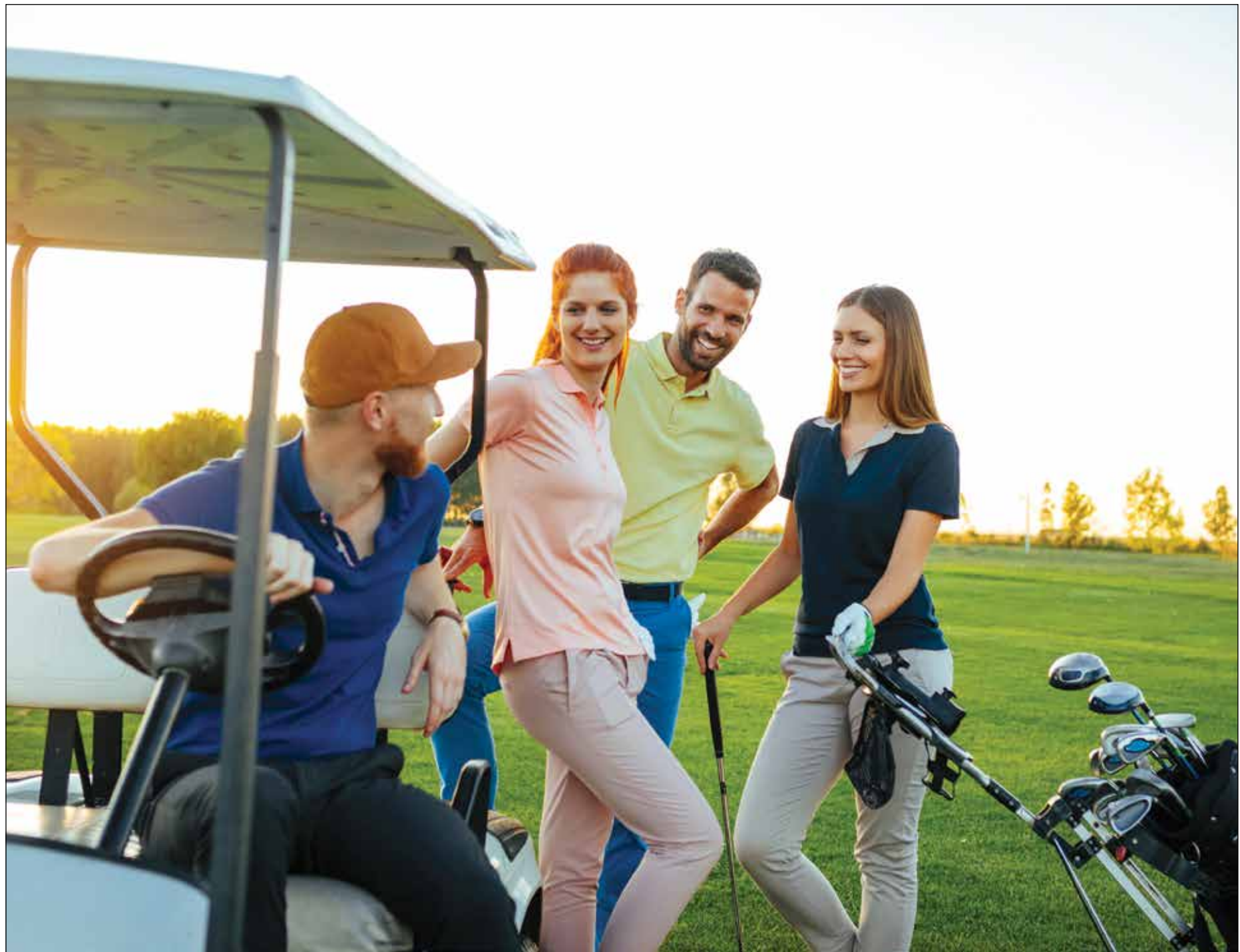
Here's a deeper dive into golf-course etiquette.

AVOID SLOW PLAY

Many pros suggest playing “ready golf,” meaning you hit the ball as soon as possible — even if you aren't away — until you reach the greens. Fooling around when it's your turn on the course can directly impact the pacing and enjoyment of those around you. The PGA recommends that golfers begin planning your next move while walking or driving at a reasonable speed between strokes. The process of evaluation as you prepare to take a shot should take less than 45 seconds. If you aren't ready, encourage someone else in your group to swing instead; if everyone is taking a bit too long, encourage those behind you to play through. Don't search for a lost ball for more than five minutes.

CONTROL YOUR TEMPER

Sulking, throwing clubs or barking out various profanities disturbs play for all of those around you. Every golfer has experienced their share of on-course frustration — it's part of the game, really. So why



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not find less obtrusive ways to vent your anger? You might follow a bad hole with a little harder tee shot, for instance. Avoiding confrontations can be as easy as standing still when someone else is setting up. Position yourself across from the next player up, or on a diagonal. Stay that way until

the ball leaves his club. Don't walk through anyone else's line of play — and turn off your cell phone. These little gestures can help make sure that others don't become enraged either.

RESPECT THE COURSE

Fix your ball marks using one of the special two-

pronged devices, a tee or pen-knife. Divots can usually be easily repair by replacing the missing tuft grass. The most contentious golfers carry seed mix on the side of their cart to refill larger divots. Rake the bunkers, even after a bad shot. Avoid wet areas if you use a cart, in an effort to limit

any visual traces that you were there. If you're in a group, scatter your carts rather than following the leader, to cut down on course wear and tear. Lay the flagstick to the side, so it doesn't damage the green. Running and driving too fast can also mangle the turf.

America's Top Public Courses

You don't have to be a member of a country club to play some of the most amazing courses in the United States.

There are also traditionally private links that now offer limited visitors packages. Together, they comprise some of America's top public courses.

PEBBLE BEACH GOLF LINKS

Pebble Beach, California

You've probably seen this course on TV, as Pebble Beach has played host to multiple U.S. Amateur and U.S. Open tournaments. Justly hailed as the greatest combination of sea and land in American golf, Pebble Beach boasts nine holes on bluffs above the Pacific.

PACIFIC DUNES

Bandon, Oregon

The second course at the Bandon Dunes Resort likewise takes advantage of sweeping ocean views. Designer Tom Doak moved heaven and a lot of earth in 2001 to create a 6,633-yard, par 71 course dotted with signature rolling fairways, challenging greens, and rugged dunes.

WHISTLING STRAITS

Haven, Wisconsin

Whistling Straits was fashioned after traditional Irish links, meaning there are no rakes — despite the presence of more than 1,000 bunkers.



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This 7,790-yard, par 72 course was a flat former Army airbase sitting along Lake Michigan before designer Pete Dye transformed it.

THE OCEAN COURSE

Kiawah Island, South Carolina

Specifically created for 1991's Ryder Cup, the Ocean Course remains a very challenging proposition, with saw-grass-ringed holes, surprising bunkers and tricky slopes.

Elevated playing surfaces offer sweeping Atlantic views, while also subjecting golfers to stiff coastal winds.

SHADOW CREEK

North Las Vegas, Nevada

Designed by Tom Fazio with assistance from Steve Wynn, Shadow Creek is a 7,560-yard, par 72 course that was once for members only. Wynn, a hotel and Las Vegas real-estate magnate, used it to entertain clients and celebrity pals. In a call

back, the course still has limo service.

PINEHURST RESORT NO. 2

Pinehurst, North Carolina

This course was completely restored in 2010, as Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw oversaw a year-long project meant to showcase No. 2's natural character. They even reduced irrigation to ensure that newly installed native sands would never be overtaken by

Bermuda again.

BETHPAGE STATE PARK (BLACK)

Farmingdale, New York

This course experienced a similar renaissance, as patchy fairways and gravel-filled bunkers gave way to a challenging but fun new experience. Bethpage is now regularly home to PGA Tour events, including the U.S. Open. In keeping, it's only recommended for the most highly skilled.

Choosing an Instructor

Everyone from beginners to regular duffers can use a tip or two from a pro.

Finding one is a little like selecting a personal trainer, however, since it requires a blend of credentials and personal connection. Here's how to choose an instructor.

ASK FOR REFERRALS

Talk to your fellow players, or even friendly strangers at favored club houses. They'll be able to give you an insider's view on a prospective golf instructor's reputation, pricing and personal teaching style. You're looking for a mentor, someone who will treat your specific issues — whether it's a slice, putting yips or your faulty backswing — with patience and care. At the same time, they have to be knowledgeable enough to teach you something new, especially if you've been around the game awhile. Ultimately, this will be a collaboration.

CHECK THEIR CREDENTIALS

Any decision to move forward should also be guided by a considered look at the instructor's experience and credentials. Did they play professionally? How long have they been working as an instructor? Do they have current membership with national coaching groups or organizations? If so, when



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does that membership expire? Answers to these questions will tell you a lot about how serious an instructor is about their work, and how much expertise they'll bring to the lessons.

HIGH-TECH HELP

Gone are the days when an afternoon at the driving range

was the beginning and ending of an instructional meeting. The best teachers use technology nowadays to super-charge their lessons. Swing videos, virtual courses and ball-flight monitoring make it easier to visualize what you need to do with the club — and then to put these new lessons into action. Ask

any future coach how they'll use high-tech gadgets to help take your game to the next level.

MAKE IT PERSONAL

A prospective instructor has to have all of that, and more. Make sure they are a good fit for you as a golfer, including shared goals, per-

sonality types, and approaches to the game. They'll have to be relatable in order for you to get the most out of these lessons. Some instructors are part of a larger staff focused on improving your game, including sports psychologists, fitness instructors or a nutritionist. Make sure you connect with them as well.



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How to Extend Your Drive

The best way to subtract a few strokes from any final golf score is to sharpen your putting game. But where's the fun in that? Not when you could get to the green faster with stronger swings off the tee!

A few easy adjustments can help extend your drive.

FOCUS ON WHERE

The spot in which your club actually strikes the ball can make a huge difference when talking about distance. If the goal is a longer drive, make sure the ball meets the face of the club between the center and top. Swing technology can help you determine

what you're hitting the ball, or you can try something a little more low-tech: Draw a dot in the back the ball with a non-permanent marker, then swing. The ink on your driver will tell you where your swing is connecting.

TEE IT UP

Once you've solved ball-to-club face issue, make sure you're getting the most out of how you tee the ball. The

ball's equator should be in line with the top of the club face as you set up. You want to hit in an upward angle, and teeing at this height encourages that.

ALL ABOUT ANGLES

Now it's time to increase your launch angle. A difference of as little as five degrees can lead to huge gains. Try moving the ball forward in your stance, even if it's only an inch or two. If you swing normally, the angle of trajectory will naturally change. Keep in mind that striking the ball at the bottom of your swing arc reduces power. Have a golf partner record your swing on his cellphone to more closely

examine your approach.

PRACTICE PATIENCE

First, you have to find a reliable stroke that creates straight drives down the middle of the fairway. Then? Well, practice makes perfect. The problem is, every golfer arrives to the game with their own swing issues. What works for a pro might not work for someone at the local municipal course — and vice versa. Finding your own sweet spot may involve a visit with a trusted golf pro, more regular visits to the driving range, usage of today's latest swing gadgetry or some combination of all three. But whatever you do, be prepared for it to take some time.

2022's Coolest Golf Gadgets

Let's face it, golf demands the kind of consistency and accuracy that only a machine could provide. Luckily, there are lots of them out there to help improve your game.

Here's a look at some of 2022's coolest golf gadgets.

GOLF SWING ANALYZER

Track your performance with the Blast Motion Golf Swing Analyzer I, which provides valuable insights into your stroke by attaching to the end of any club. The Blast Motion analyzer automatically records each swing, then sends it to your linked smart phone. You can watch later, even in slow motion. It's small enough not to add significant weight, and is easily transferred to any club so you can analyze your entire game.

GOLF GPS/RANGEFINDER

Clip the nearly weightless GolfBuddy Voice 2 Golf GPS/Rangefinder to your bag, belt or hat and you'll have a hands-free guide to the next hole, golf course or club. The in-built voice system allows you to make requests and get directions without trying to make out something on a tiny screen. And don't worry about getting lost on the back nine: When charged, the battery lasts some

14 hours. The GolfBuddy GPS/rangefinder also has enough memory capacity to include 40,000 courses.

INDOOR PUTTING GREEN

Put away the styrofoam cup: The nine-foot SKLZ Accelerator Pro Indoor Putting Green will help improve anyone's performance on the green. Practice from three dif-

ferent lengths on a surface that boasts an upslope construction to provide gravity returns. The surface is meant to simulate actual green conditions, with a Stimpmeter rating of 10 on firm carpeting and 11 on a hard surface.

CELL-PHONE HOLDER

Tired of asking a buddy to video your swing? The handy

SelfieGOLF Cell Phone Holder helps you position your phone to easily capture swing videos, whether indoors or outdoors. A pair of clips secure the phone, while also ensuring the holder fits any model. Purchase a separate alignment stick, or attach the holder to the drivers, bag or irons. It's available in six different color options.

POP-UP CHIPPING NET

Practice anywhere with the PodiuMax Pop Up Chipping Net, a very lightweight portable option for those looking to up their short game. The instant pop-up design makes it deployable in a matter of seconds, and you never need special tools. The net features three targets to help improve accuracy.



Golf Course Safety

Golf's outdoor setting can be so relaxing that you might forget the potential dangers all around you.

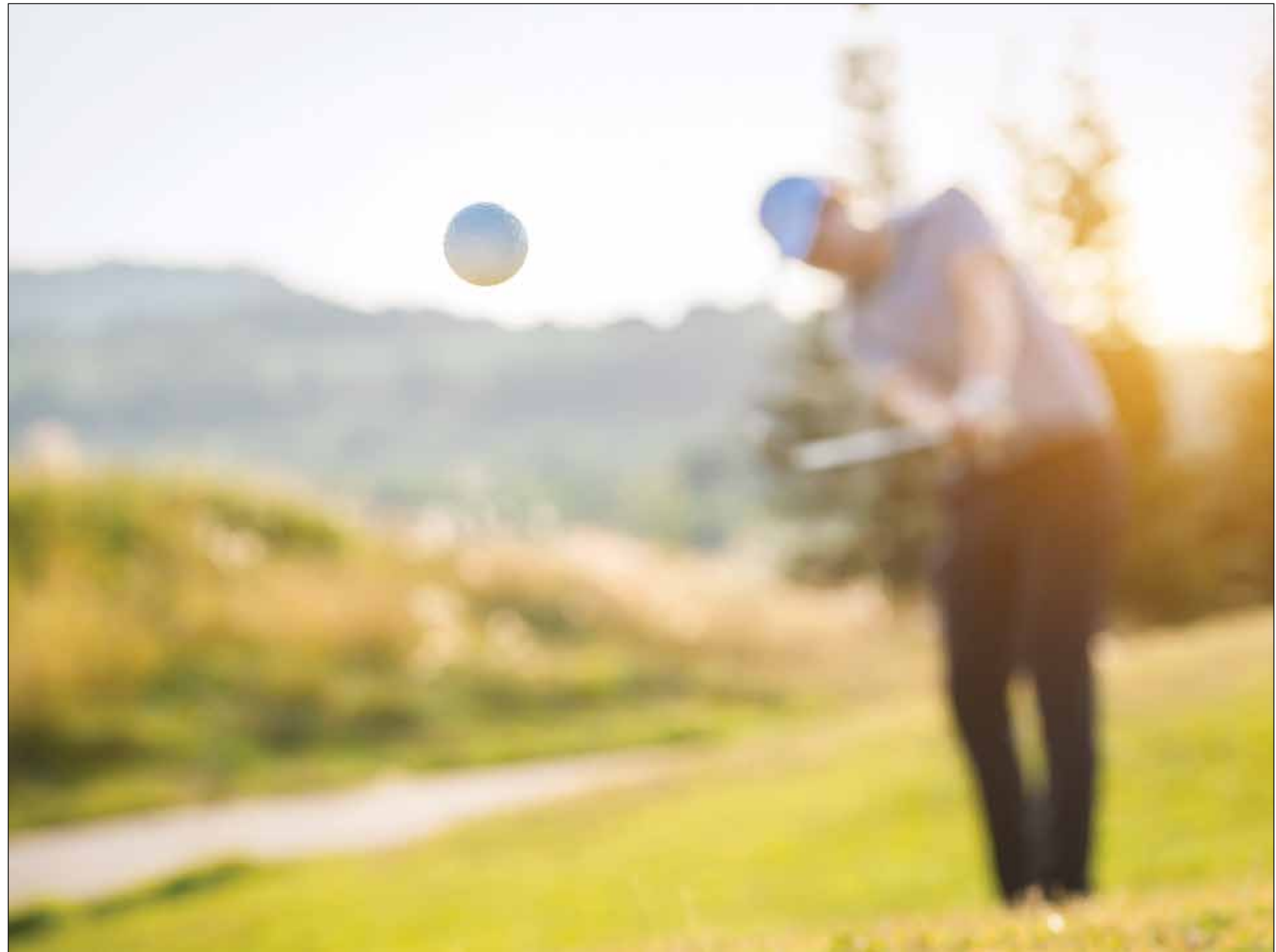
Injuries happen when we don't take golf course safety seriously.

REMEMBER TO WARM UP

Any golfer is subject to a muscle sprain, while issues like tendinitis of the wrist and golfer's elbow tend to develop over time. Creating a proper warmup routine can minimize your risk with these very common ailments. Take a few slow-motion swings, walk around the block, and do a few lunges or squats. That will help you quickly regain a full range of motion. Remember to drink lots of water, both during play and afterward. If needed, rest between rounds to avoid injuries related to overuse.

BE BALL AWARE

Golf requires metal clubs and a very hard ball. That can be a recipe for injury, so make sure your partners are out of range when you take your swing. They can be in danger from the swing itself, or a whizzing shot. Be aware of other golfing groups; wait until those ahead of you on the course are well out of your swing range. If a swing gets away from you and it looks like your ball is headed toward someone else, shout



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“fore!” as loud as you can. It's a universal warning to find cover.

CHECK YOUR FORECAST

Golfers are typically in open spaces or near trees, with a metal club in hand. That increases their risk of being struck by lightning. In fact, about five percent of our

annual lightning-related fatalities occur on golf courses, according to a National Weather Service study. The total numbers are small, but the danger isn't zero. That's why it's smart to check the weather forecast before hitting the links. If an unexpected storm gathers, put down your clubs and avoid trees

since they're said to attract lightning strikes. Try to quickly return to a permanent structure or a fully enclosed vehicle.

AVOID WILDLIFE

Golf takes place in and around the natural habitats of creatures large and small. The specific kind of wildlife

will depend on where your chosen course is located, so study up before you head out. Remember to closely examine the area anytime your ball ends up near water or in high grass.

Golfers are particularly prone to on-course encounters with snakes, bees and even alligators.

Improve Your Putting

An impressive drive means nothing if you can't get the golf ball in the cup.

Here are a few tips to help you become a more consistent putter.

MAKING A READ

Angles and slopes on our nation's greens continue to befuddle golfers. In fact, they under-read a shot on more than 65% of their putts, according to a Golf Magazine study conducted by the Pinehurst Golf Academy. Start looking at the lay of the green when your ball lands. Develop a routine, and stick with it. If needed, don't be shy about pacing out the distance. Reverse your perspective by looking at the shot from behind the hole.

RELAX YOUR GRIP

Better control on the greens starts with your grip. Try out different styles until you find one that helps you achieve your putting goals. Whatever you choose, handle the putter equally with both hands. A dominant hand will impact trajectory and speed. Then? Relax. Loosen your grip not just at the hand level, but your arms and shoulders, as well.

WATCH YOUR STANCE

With your grip now relaxed, move forward and back until you find the perfect vertical eye line to the ball. Once you've aligned, place your feet



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at shoulder width. If your feet are too wide or too narrow, you may experience balance issues. For the most effective putting stroke, lean slightly toward your toes, rather than leaning back on your heels. Once you've found a stance you're comfortable with, make a mental note so that you can

consistently recreate your position.

KEEP STEADY

Great putting requires that your body remains completely still. Any movement, no matter how small, has a big impact. If you're not centered, or lack general stability, your

putting path will remain a work in progress. Try intently focusing on the spot where the putter will impact the ball to keep steady.

CONSIDER LESSONS

If your putting game could still use a little polishing, check with a local golf profes-

sional about scheduling lessons. They can closely examine your stroke, offering baseline assessments and tips for improvement on both your alignment and approach. The smallest refinements to your posture, grip, eye positioning and state of mind can garner huge results.