

The Single Most Important Habit of a Highly Effective Golfer

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What separates a great golfer from an average golfer?

Great question! And you'll probably find as many answers as you can people to ask.

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Since the person with the lowest score is the winner, then the golfer who can find a way to score lower on a consistent basis will win more often.

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This is exactly what Tiger Woods does every other week on the PGA tour. Tiger has found a way to score lower even though his scoring ways are somewhat unconventional.

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What 's unconventional? Well, Tiger spends a lot of time off the fairway and many times doesn't find the green in regulation but has the ability to consistently make par or better.

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A good example of this unconventional golf was in the recent Buick tournament in La Jolla. In one of his rounds Tiger hit just one fairway out of fourteen and yet found a way to score seventy one, keeping him in contention for the tournament and ultimately led to him winning that event for the fourth time.

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If it's more challenging to score lower when you're in the rough more time than you'd like to be, how come Tiger can play so well?

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Tiger hits the ball a long way from the tee. This leaves him easier shots because he's using shorter irons, so he can hit higher out of the long grass, and stop on the greens.

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Can we use this strategy?

Absolutely! well, only if we can hit the ball more than three hundred yards from the tee, (which few of us can do!!)

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What can we learn from this strategy?

Get better at the parts of the game that produce lower scores. Generally golfers use more shots from within one hundred yards of the green than from outside this distance.

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Tiger's a winner because he can get the ball closer to the hole from anywhere around the green consistently, and the percentage of putts that he makes is higher.

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To lower your scores by making more putts, you have to learn how to hit your short greenside shots closer to the hole more often.

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Imagine you're just off the green's surface. The hole is twenty feet away from you. The green is relatively flat. The ball is sitting down in the grass enough that you can't use your putter.

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What shot will you play to guarantee that you hit the ball within three to five feet of the hole more than sixty percent of the time?

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A simple chip shot like this brings more people undone than many other shots that are played from greenside.

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You should be able to hit this shot close to the hole because the stroke you employ is not much longer than a long putting stroke. Go to my website www.golf-school-australia.com to download my ebook "Lower scores in Record Time"

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A shot of this length should be easier to play more consistently. So why is this not the case?

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Let's go back to the Buick tournament for a moment.

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If you watched the playoff you would have seen an example of a chip shot gone wrong. Rookie Nathan Green from Australia was in the rough just off the green surface on the first play off hole.

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He needed to hit his ball close to the hole to stay in the play off. Nathan addressed the ball and proceeded to hit the ground and grass just behind the ball barely moving the ball forward, ultimately sealing his fate.

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Even the very best golfers can be brought undone by one of the easiest shots in golf to execute.

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The chip shot can be played with many different clubs in the bag from many different places around the green. It's a shot you have to get better to score lower in your rounds. No, it's not as exciting as a tee shot. But it's probably more valuable when turning a bad score into a good one.

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Seemingly insignificant golf shots can make a huge difference to your scores. So you need to devote more time improving the results you get with them. Can we ever forget Tiger's chip shot at the 2005 Masters?

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When you play chip shots always think in terms of reducing time the ball spends in the air. So get the ball rolling across the green as early as possible. It's one of the simplest shots to learn and requires very little energy. It does take time to perfect the carry and roll elements.

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Think of a chip shot as a putt with a hop in it. Watch the pros play them. Notice how this simple stroke is executed.

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The ball is played opposite your rear inside ankle bone, with your hands positioned opposite your front inside thigh. Your shirt buttons are positioned slightly towards the target in front of the ball, which shifts your body's weight towards your front leg.

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Holding down on the handle about two inches, create a stroke that is no longer than the height of your ankles during the back swing phase and the forward swing phase, with the club head always accelerating through the golf ball.

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Spend more time on this simple yet highly effective golf shot and you will score lower. Why? Simply because the majority of shots you use are actually played from around the green more than from anywhere else.

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Putting is a huge chunk of your score. The chip, pitch and sand shots come next. Work your way from the edge of the green outwards. Make sure that you learn each shot well before you move on, and you will start to notice a reduction in your scores over time.

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Lawrence Montague is one of Australia's leading Golf Instructors, and director of the Australian High Performance Golf Academy based at Palm Meadows Resort on the Gold Coast, Queensland Australia. He and his team train amateur and professional golfers for the major golf tours around the world. For more information on attending his golf school visit www.golf-school-australia.com

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