



The 5 Steps to Build a Strong Mental Game

mini-course

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Introduction

There are 3 components to your golf game:

1. **Skill set** – swing mechanics, shot making, short game, etc
2. **Course management** – a strategy to get the ball in the hole in the fewest amount of shots
3. **Mental management** – managing your brain so that you can do #1 and #2 effectively

Let's first define "mental game"

Mental game is thinking intentionally so that you can direct your emotions to take the actions required to play your best golf.

Building a strong mental game starts with thinking on purpose.

Things to keep in mind:

- Thoughts are optional
- Your brain is negative by default, by design.
- Your emotions start with a thought
- Your emotions affect your ability to make your best swing.
- Your brain, left to its own discretion, will freak you out, make you feel like crap and create results in your golf and life you don't want.

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Stage One of Awareness - After it happens

- 1 Identify situations where you struggle with negative thoughts or emotions.
(Tee shots, three putts, people watching you, shooting 90, 100, 80)

- 2 List some things that you say about your golf game or yourself in this situation.
(When I three putt, I say to myself, I should be better than this, I am an idiot, I wasted a shot, Here we go again)

- 3 Circle one thing from the list above and write the emotion/feeling below
(Disappointed)_____

- 4 How does this emotion or feeling show up for you in your game? What happens or what do you do? (sulk, low energy, give up for a bit, withdraw, beat self up, don't focus...)

- 5 What is the affect of this on your shots or score? (I mess up the next hole or shot)

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6 Go back to the thought from Step 2 and ask yourself? Is it true? Is it useful?

How do you want to feel in this situation?

What do you need to say to yourself to feel this way?

Make a list of other phrases or caddy saying that resonate with you

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Stage Two of Awareness - While it is happening

Before a shot or round

This is when you are over the ball or walking into a shot and notice that you are feeling anxious, stressed, annoyed, etc. You may start to hear the negative chatter in your brain.

You now know that when you think these thoughts or feel this way that you don't make your best swings.

After a shot or round

It could be after a shot or hole. You may have just made a big number, hit a ball OB, or scored poorly and feel angry or disappointed, etc and are giving yourself a mental beat down. And you are struggling to get over it before the next shot.

You have two things to do:

1. Give yourself 60 seconds to be pissed, anxious or any emotion
2. Redirect with a saying or phrase that produces calm or confidence.

The hardest time to search for encouraging words to say to yourself is when you are in a negative state.

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Stage Three of Awareness - Before it happens

Your most powerful position, from a mental standpoint, is when you are onto your own brain and you are prepared with "ammunition".

Before you play, go through the **junk drawer technique** and clean house. (refer to [The Master Your Golf Brain 2.0](#) or visit podcast episode 13 [How to Mentally Prepare for a Round](#))

After a round, **evaluate** your round not for how you hit it but for how you thought or dealt with an emotion.

Learn from what worked or didn't work so that you can, anticipate that situation the next time.

REPEAT the 5 steps with any thoughts or feelings you want to clean up.

"Your brain doesn't know the whether a thought serves you or not, it only knows what you repeat the most."