



Elite Insider Circle Monthly Handicap Improver April 2017



Hello Fellow Golf Enthusiast,

This is Jaacob Bowden.

Last Month

To recap last month, golf expert Adam Young had something for us about transferring what you practice to the golf course. I can imagine many of you have had that issue at some point or another.

Getting out of block practice and more in to random practice while simulating some pressure and using the same focus of attention can definitely help.

I shared with you a message from one of our members whose goal it is to win the World Long Drive Championships this year.

I let you know about an article that came out about mine and Tom Wishon's Sterling Irons single length irons...and also about 7 different videos from both Tom and myself as well as some of our internet friends, Rick Shiels, Peter Finch, James Pickard, and Seb Carmichael-Brown.

We had a Long Drive Q&A with Dan Konyk, who is the owner of UK Powergolf Academy and has made 12 World Long Drive Championship appearances including a Top-10 in 2010 and a 449-yard drive.

Some of the key points I think to take away from Dan's Q&A are:

- He uses equipment that helps optimize his distance
- He works with various types of training aids to help himself hit it longer
- He has sufficient club head speed to be able to be competitive
- He focuses on improving his golf technique



We included a CD of my audio interview with David Edel of Edel Golf. David has a very interesting background and a variety of unique experiences in the golf industry.

If you missed it, you can log in to the member area and listen to it online at <http://members.swingmangolf.com>.

This Month

This month, here's what's coming up for you.

- Normally we have a Long Drive Q&A to see what we can glean from some of the world's longest hitters. This month we'll mix it up a bit and hear from professional speedgolfer Scott Dawley in a Speedgolf Q&A.
- Golf expert Adam Young will share with you something called "Different Practice Modes", which includes an explanation of 5 different modes of practice that you can use in your range sessions.
- Equipment expert Tom Wishon will answer a couple member questions.
- We'll have our usual "Member of the Month" and golf joke.

And as part of your Monthly Handicap Improver Insider Circle, we've included a CD of my audio interview with Orange Whip founder Jim Hackenberg. MyGolfSpy.com website visitors recently rated the Orange Whip as one of their top training aids of all time.

In the interview we talked about things like:

- How he started out in college golf
- What a unior player should do in order to get into a college golf program
- What Phil Mickelson was like as a college player
- What a typical week looked like playing at ASU
- How Jim became Patrick Moore's caddy
- How Geoff Ogilvy and other pros inspired him to come up with the Orange Whip
- What Greg Norman did different than Dustin Johnson or Padraig Harrington

Side Notes

A few side notes...

- 1) As I've mentioned previously, Tom Wishon and I are adding a new LW to the Sterling Irons set. Those should be ready around June 11th.

The LW will have a more traditional wedge shape look, it will blend in nicely to your existing set, and it's got a zero bounce heel grind.

What that means is that the bounce on the heel has been ground down. The effect of that is being able to open the club face to play flop shots from tight lies and hard pan while still retaining bounce that can be used for shots from the rough and heavier sand.

- 2) Tom, myself, and the clubs were also featured in a number of various places, including:
 - MyGolfSpy – “Trend or Fad: Single Length Irons” at <http://www.mygolfspy.com/tred-or-fad-single-length-irons>.
 - Golf Digest – “Can one size fit all with irons?” at <http://www.golfdigest.com/story/single-length-irons-can-one-size-fit-all-equipment>.



- Shawn Clement of Wisdom in Golf – “WISHON STERLING SINGLE LENGTH IRONS REVIEW” at http://youtu.be/Yzn7FbdB_aY.

Please check those out!

- 3) I recently had a wonderful golf trip to Switzerland and Italy. I met up with Swing Man Golf member and Sterling Irons player Steve Thom, as well as European Senior Tour Player Andre Bossert.

We played a couple top courses around Zurich and then went down to Italy to play in Milan and Como over a long Easter weekend.

For future reference, I would not recommend going through the Gottard Tunnel over that weekend. We had a 9-mile traffic backup!

Interestingly, I'll be caddying for Andre in the Senior PGA Championship coming up next month. Of course, I will be sharing with you about that upcoming experience from an exclusive behind-the-scenes standpoint.

Normally, we put together your Monthly Handicap Improver around mid-month. With the major being played from the 25th to 28th, so that probably won't make it to you until the June MHI.



Patience is a virtue!

Okay...let's get going!

Speedgolf Q&A with Scott Dawley

Age: 38 (06/06/78)

Height: 5'11"

Weight: 165 lbs

Sponsors:

- OnCore Golf
- Rival and Revel
- Speedgolf USA
- LinksRun

Special Accomplishments:

- Founder Speedgolf Texas 2013
- Executive Director Speedgolf International 2014
- Founder LinksRun 2015
- Creator & Co-host The Pace Of Change Golf Podcast 2015
- 2nd place 2015 Speedgolf World Championships (6 clubs, even par 72 in 48 min.)
- Expert Team Member on Golf Channel's reality competition series Altered Course, aired Summer '15
- Founder Speedgolf USA 2016
- Co-Founder Alternative Golf Alliance 2016



How did you first get involved in speedgolf?

Played golf in early 2013 with the 2012 Speedgolf World Champion Chris Walker

What clubs do you have in your bag?

- TaylorMade M1
- Adams 20* hybrid
- Ping S57 8-iron
- 52* Cleveland
- Toe-Up Odyssey Putter

Why did you pick out those particular clubs?

Prefer to hit Driver whenever possible.

Hybrid for long Par 3's, Par 5's.

Rarely need more than 8-iron on approaches. Can hit 52*130 yards or flop out of deep bunker.

With that few of clubs, there of course would be shots that are between full swing distances.

How do you like to play those?

My first choice is to shut my stance down, hood the face, and swing hard! I can hit my 8-iron 135 or 185. Any further, I hit a soft cut with the hybrid, or a run-up.

What do you do to work on your fitness?

Whole body strength training in the gym 4-5 days, swing speed training, yoga, 25 miles running per week, all outside if possible. Tempo mix of Zone 2, interval sprints on track, carefree trail running with no quantification, and of course Speedgolf.

Based on what you've learned from speedgolf, what advice or drills that you could give the regular golfer for them to apply to their normal golf game?

Pick up the pace. Play from the heart. Everyone, except maybe Rob Hogan, should be playing golf faster. (Rob plays 18 holes in 40 minutes or less and plays off a scratch.) It may seem uncomfortable at first, but quickly you'll realize your score doesn't suffer, and actually improves most of the time.

How do you play faster?

Play without making any practice swings. Play with half a set. Play without checking the exact yardage. Play without the assistance of technology. Be creative and have fun disrupting your normal practice/playing/pre-shot routine.

Soon, you'll find yourself playing by feel, in the moment, and leaving the course satisfied regardless of score.



Anything else you want to say or add?

Traditional golf is a game I have tremendous respect and love for. I wish everyone would try it at least once. But it can be tough to master or even enjoy without sufficient practice, consistent effort, and a sizeable financial commitment.

Fortunately the world of golf is evolving and has already grown beyond its roots.

There are a variety of Alternative Golf Experiences gaining in popularity, sports like FootGolf, DiscGolf, FlingGolf, and SpeedGolf that follow the basic rules of golf, but do not require a high level of proficiency to enjoy the experience.

Not only will you have fun on the golf course playing these hybrid formats, but you may discover this kind of cross-training pays dividends in your regular golf game.

Where can people contact you or learn more about you?

Instagram: @scottdawleygolf

Twitter: @scottdawleygolf

Websites: ScottDawley.com/PaceOfChange.com/USASpeedgolf.com/LinksRun.com

Different Practice Modes

By Adam Young

If you are like most golfers, your practice routine is the same and a bit too.... routine.

Let's look at some alternative methods of practice that you can try to spice up your range sessions.



Blocked

Most golfers get a huge bucket of balls, put an alignment stick down for their feet, and proceed to bash each ball towards a singular target.

While this can serve a purpose, it might not be the most productive form. Typically, I would advocate this form of practice to a student if they are in the early stages of changing a movement pattern and are at 30% success rate or lower. It serves its purpose to build strength and conditioning for the new movement, and can also help build confidence.

However, this form of practice has also been shown to not retain for long, or transfer to the golf course well. This is because it misses many of the elements of what actually creates a good golfer.

Broken

Broken practice is a step in the right direction regarding more effective practice.

Put simply, you would find some way of breaking up the rhythm of



Swing Man Golf | <http://www.SwingManGolf.com>

your ball to ball beating. This could be as small as stepping out of the bay and going through your entire routine each time.

This forces us to learn how to solve the problem of setting up to the ball each time – something which is lost in blocked practice.

This small act of breaking up the practice momentarily aids in transfer of skills to the golf course, and also increases the speed of learning. Another advantage is that we hit less balls per hour – helping our bodies suffer from injuries less (as well as saving money on golf balls).

Random

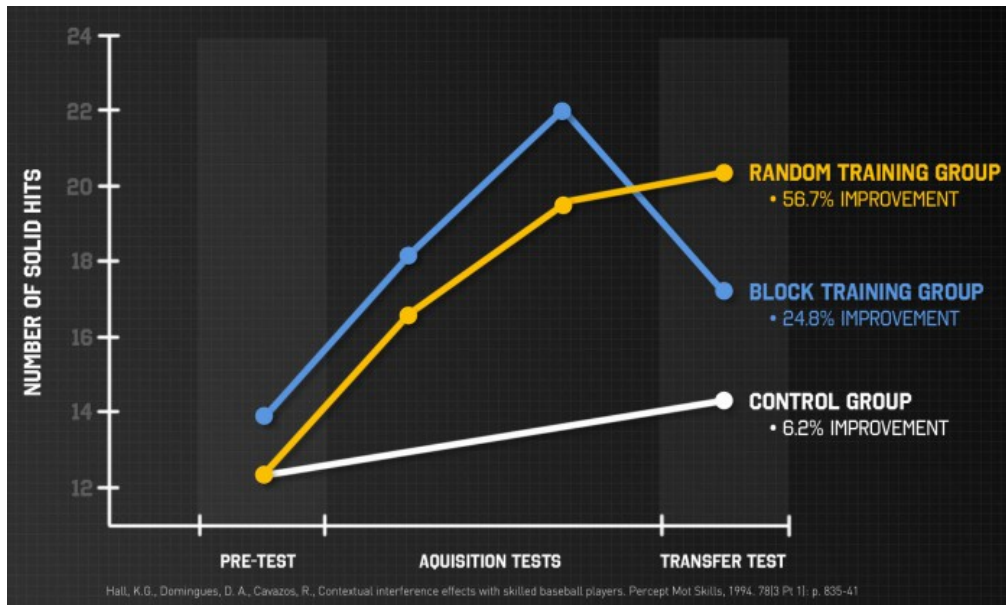
If you really want to up the ante – try random practice.

It's not as crazy as it sounds; it is simply adding more variation to your practice in a way which simulates the actual game of golf more.

For example:

- Changing clubs after each shot
- Changing targets after each shot
- Changing the lie each time
- For advanced players, changing the shape of shot (draw or fade) or trajectory each time

This is much more contextual, as we end up having to think about each shot more carefully, as well as prepare effectively for the changes. Any time we pick up a new club, we have to change our swing subtly (forces, torques and kinematics are all going to be slightly different). This improves our ability to select the right movement pattern for the shot in hand – a vital skill for on-course play.



Research in other sports has shown increase in retention and learning with random practice vs blocked

Also, by changing the target each time, we are learning the skills of aligning to the target, as well as improving our perceptual skills (where the target is in space).

The main disadvantage with this type of practice is that you may perform worse (during practice) than with blocked practice – simply because it is more difficult and works on more of your skills. However, if you are able to “suck it up”, you will be rewarded with increase in skill, increase in retention and increase in transference to the golf course.

The bulk of scientific literature supports this idea.

Variability

Contrary to popular belief, skilled golfers have actually been found to have higher rates of variability through the last moments in impact.

A method that I use to improve the coordination and skills of a golfer is something called “variability practice” – a mode where we encourage doing the skill in varying ways.

For example:

- Trying to hit the middle of the clubface, but setting up out of the toe/heel

- Trying to hit a straight shot, but setting up with the clubface open/closed
- Trying to shape the ball onto the target
- Alternating between hovering the club and grounding it at address
- Alternating between taking a deep divot or a shallow divot

During this type of practice, it is less important that you perform it perfectly, but more important that you are exploring different ways of doing the same task.

In the short term, this style of practice may cause a small amount of “disruption”, but long term benefits are huge improvements in skill and coordination.

Lots of players often figure something out that is so helpful to them that they start using it in their real swing.

Differential

Similar to variability practice but with one subtle difference – we are exploring variables which are non-functional (or ones we wouldn’t normally use during the course of play).

For example:

- Trying to intentionally hit a big snap hook/slice
- Trying to toe or shank the ball
- Trying to top the ball or thin it
- Exploring the extreme end of the scale with a movement pattern you want to change

This screenshot of a video of Rory McIlroy topping the ball intentionally is one of my favorites

Most people just read that list and thought “wow – that is much too “out-there” for me”.



I get it, but before you leave this paragraph, understand that, in my 10,000 hours-worth of teaching, this has been one of the most powerful tools in my armory. I have seen so many players have breakthroughs in minutes regarding areas of their game that they may have struggled with for years.

For example, I have had shankers of the ball spend 10 minutes trying to intentionally toe the ball, and never hit a shank for the rest of their golfing careers (to date).

Before you pass this idea off as something for other golfers to experiment with – pick a skill, go to the range tonight and explore it.

Have some fun!

Summary

So, there you have it – 5 modes of practice that can spice up your range sessions.

Why not try each one for one day a week and see how you fare?

If your progress has slowed in the recent years, these can certainly be worth a try – you might find your rate of improvement speeds up again.

About Adam

Adam Young is an expert on practice design for golfers and is the author of “The Practice Manual – The Ultimate Guide for Golfers”, a best seller on Amazon.com in both the US, UK, Canada, Germany, and France...and has been featured as a must-have book on Golf Channel.

You can read more about his theories in his book at <http://tinyurl.com/adamyounggolf> as well as The Strike Plan - a video series looking in depth at the concepts, skill-building drills and techniques which create crisper strikes for better distance control and accuracy.

Your Questions Answered

Member Question:

I am getting ready to buy a set of the Sterling Irons, but not sure which wedges to play.

How would I decide between:

- 1) My current Titleist Vokeys bought last year; reshaft these?

- 2) buy the Sterling wedges as part of the set, to match other irons or
- 3) I like the look and technology of the Micro-Groove HM wedges

What factors should I consider?

- Tom G

Tom Wishon's Answer:

Thanks very much for your time and your interest!

Now that the Sterling Irons have been on the market for about a year, we're beginning to be able to see the trends and habits that golfers are following with regard to how they do their set makeups with the Sterling Irons.

In general, we can tell that the better the player, the more tendency there is for them to keep using their existing sand wedge and to do the single length irons down to the gap wedge.

With many of the players from say, 8 handicap on up, the trend is to go with the Sterling Irons SW.

I believe the reason is because better players often come upon a SW that they get used to sort of like a pair of old comfortable shoes. For some players, the SW is a very personal club, one they evolve into liking as they hit all manner of different shots with it over many years - chips, pitches, sand, rough, cut shots, 1/4 shots, half shots, 3/4 shots and full shots. All of those different uses with different speeds and different swings tends to build the story to support staying with the old SW if it is a favorite club for the player. But if the SW is not an old friend per se, then going with the SW as a part of the single length is not a bad way to go.

The other side of this is the length - some golfers just feel better about hitting all those different SW shots I described with a length that is shorter than the 8-iron or 7-iron length of the Sterling Irons single length irons. Some players will set up into their comfortable SW stance and set up with a Sterling Irons single length iron and just find they feel the SW is too long for their comfort.

But I will tell you that we are about 2 months away from releasing a brand-new Sterling Irons SW and a new LW to go with it. We decided to give the golfers an option with the SW at least in terms of the shape of the head.

First generation Sterling Irons SW was designed to look like the profile shape of the rest of the irons in the set. I realized that many golfers use what we call, standalone wedges ala the Vokey or Cleveland or the PCF's you are referring to from my design work in wedges. Those wedges all are designed with more of what we call a round or tear drop shape profile that is totally different than the profile look of the 8, 9, PW, gap wedge in iron sets.

So we designed the new Sterling SW and LW to be a shape like the PCF or HM Series wedges in my product line to give single length iron players an option for their SW and LW that is much more like what they probably have been playing.

However, the new Sterling Irons SW and LW will not have a milled face nor will they have the micro grooves.

So that means the PCF should spin the ball more than the new Sterling Irons wedges, if that is a big draw of the PCF's in your mind.

In the end, it is your decision but I tend to think that you might be more comfortable going to the gap wedge with the single length and then going with the SW as a separate entity.

Member Question:

What is the bounce on the current Sterling Irons SW?

I just got fitted and ordered a set 5 - SW...without knowing there is a new SW coming out.

Is the current one able to be opened with a zero degree bounce?? What about the new one and LW?

I know this is a preference thing, but how are people using the SW out of the sand, adapting a new stance with the longer club, or choking down and using their existing stance?

I will give the longer shaft/stance a try...just not sure how it will work...and I know that is an impossible question for you to answer as everyone is different...just wondering what you have been seeing. Thanks.

Tom Wishon's Answer:

The bounce sole angle on the current Sterling Irons SW is a straight 12*.

The new SW and new LW will both be designed as more traditional profile wedges, ala the shapes I used on my HM Series wedge family and not too far from what is used on the Vokeys and Cleveland's as well. Those new wedges are being designed with the zero bounce heel to go with a 12* bounce on the SW and 8* bounce on the LW. Looking at hopefully early June to have these new wedges ready to ship.

There is kind of a split in use of the current Sterling SW. In this first full year of watching the sales and fitting use, we tend to see that some of the low handicap players are opting to keep their current SW and go with the Sterlings in the 4 to GW or 5-GW set makeup, depending on their clubhead speed. Not all of them, but some.

Among the players from say 7 to 20 something handicap, they are tending to use the Sterling Irons SW.

Technique has been split as well with some gripping down for shots from sand so they can match a stance/set up position they are comfortable with from the past, while others do grip back on the club and just accommodate that length with their stance and set up. It's not much of a change from the norm since a single length SW at an 8-iron length is only going to be around 1 inch longer than what normal conventional SW lengths are running these days.

Member of the Month

This month's member of the month is 6.1 handicapper Steve Thom living in Otelfingen, Switzerland.

Steve has only been playing golf for several years and he got his start in the game watching the videos on the Swing Man Golf YouTube Channel.



<http://www.youtube.com/swingmangolf>

Through hard work and practice, Steve quickly lowered his handicap down to an exclusive club of single digit handicappers.

Steve now also plays the Sterling Irons® single length irons.



Finishing Up With Fun

Three old men are about to play their regular match when the starter asks if they mind that a lady joins them to make up a four ball.

When they see the stunning beautiful 18-year old blonde they all agree that she would make a great 4th.

Her standard of golf does not match her looks and after playing 17 bad holes she gets to the 18th and has a 20-foot putt for a par.

"I would do anything in the world to get a par" she tells the three men.

All three obviously have the same thing in mind.

The first man says, "Hold your hands tight together and aim about 6 inches to the right of the hole".

The second man says, "No, no, aim just inside the left edge and hit it firm, make sure you do not leave it short".

The 3rd gentleman walks around the green surveying the hole from every angle and say's..."Ah, its a gimmie."

We hope you enjoyed the Monthly Handicap Improver...feel free to contact us at info@swingmangolf.com with questions, comments, suggestions, etc!

Have a great month!