



preshot routine

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Great athletes in all sports have one thing in common – focus. That is, they all focus on their targets during a play or motion. Basketball players focus on the rim during a shot. Baseball pitchers focus on the mitt of the catcher during a pitch. Tennis players focus on a spot on the other side of the net during a hit. Great golfers are no different. They focus on their target during a swing. The motion itself is simply a reaction the target. It is subconscious.

The thing is, there is no sense in focusing on a target unless you can set-up properly to the golf ball first. Setting up properly to the golf ball prior to the hit is our pre-shot routine.

A stable pre-shot routine is your template for consistency in a round of golf. By repeating the same procedure prior to each shot, you will gain confidence and reliability in your game regardless of the pressures during the round. In addition, you will develop a rock solid set-up every-time to the ball.

In a good pre-shot routine, a player will cover five basic steps before the stroke - Aim, Grip, Alignment, Ball-Position, and Posture. The whole procedure is natural not mechanical. Generally speaking a good routine will be a habit without thought. The whole routine will last between 10 and 20 seconds.

Step #1 - Aim

All good players begin their routines by standing behind the ball-target-line. From this perspective it is easy to see the line you want the ball to start on. It is good to pick out an exact point in the distance where you want the ball to go. Keep in mind this point is not always the flag. Also be specific, a point like the fairway is too general and errand shots could result. A tree limb, bush or anything that stands out is the best point. Now, pick out another spot along the same line just a few feet from the ball. When we walk up to the golf ball later, it will be easier to aim the clubface to this spot instead of the spot in the distance. This spot a few feet away is called our intermediate target.

John Bertges Biography:



John has spent over fifteen years traveling around the world teaching & coaching the game of golf. He has trained with top PGA touring pros and well-known instructors in the business. He has spent time at the world renowned PGA West in LaQuinta, California, studying golf swing mechanics with such notables as Mac O'Grady.

In 1995, John became a Class A member of the PGA of America. In 1998, he became a Master Professional of the Professional Golf Teachers and Coaches of America.

From 2000 through 2002, John was a Division III women's golf coach. He led his team to two consecutive conference championships and a top ten finish in the NCAA Women's Golf Championship. He was awarded "College Golf Coach of the Year" two years in a row by the NCAA's CCIW Conference.

In Asia, John is honored as being the first ever golf professional to teach a golf instruction certification school in China. To date, John has taught over 15,000 individual lessons around the world.

Presently, John operates Bertges Golf Academy, Inc. He is also the director of instruction for all Guaranteed Golf Schools in Indiana.

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Step #2 - Grip

Get your grip now when you are behind the ball-target-line. Start by placing your target hand on the club then lift the club up off the ground and place your trail hand on. Gripping now will assure that you are relaxed and not holding on too tight. Do this as you occasionally look at the target. Make sure the blade is level or pointing straight up and down. Holding the club off the ground while gripping will give you a better sense of the clubface in the hands. Also, waggle the club a few times to get some feel for the shot. This gives you a sense of motion and keeps things more relaxed.



Step #3 - Club Face Aligning

As you walk into the golf ball set the club face directly behind the golf ball first. Keep the leading edge aligned precisely at the intermediate target that you picked out earlier. This is a critical step. Setting the clubface down first establishes a target-line so you can align your body to it later.



Step #4 - Body Aligning & Ball-Position

Next, place your feet together in front of the ball parallel to the target-line. Assume your stance by stepping forward with your target foot and parallel the target-line. Widen your back foot by stepping back also parallel to the ball-target-line. The width of your back foot is determined by the length of the club. Step further back for long clubs. This stepping determines your ball-position.



Step #5 - Posture

Now, get into your posture. Stand erect to the ball with your spine then bend from the waist. Be careful to keep your spine tilted forward without slouching. Lastly flex your knees a bit to get into balance. You want to take your time here to set some good angles.

Now you are all ready to hit. Make a few practice swings or waggles before the shot just to get loose. Keep breathing. I see a lot of players stop breathing at this point and tension sets in. After you look at the target for a final time, you are ready to pull the trigger. Now you are totally committed to the shot. Don't waste too much time between the last look and when you hit. You will begin to lose the image of the target in your mind's eye if you wait too long. Finally, make your swing a reaction to the target. You almost want to go brain dead at this point and just let it fly.

