



RULE OF THIRDS PRACTICE

THERE is nothing more disheartening than to be hitting the ball well during your practice sessions and then to have the same old struggles when you get to the first tee. Time and again I hear comments from players who are frustrated they can't take the gains they are making in their practice onto the golf course.

The objective of practice is to lower your scores. There needs to be a way to transfer the gains from practice to the golf course in an effective and efficient manner. And of course there is a way.

Think of your practice as having three distinct modes (see diagrams).

The first mode of practice is technical development. For most players this is the only type of practice they do. They tinker and make improvements to their swing usually with a favourite club or two and are mostly trying to hit the same type of shot. This is completely unlike what they do on the golf course, where every shot is a new event with a different club.

The second mode of practice incorporates variation. It seems illogical, but the best way to get a greater understanding of how your golf swing works is to hit shots and be constantly varying target, club used, shot type and shot shape (pictured). Practising this way is much more likely to bring out the golfing artist in you as well.

The final mode is the testing, or competitive mode. When you complete practice drills, which have a scoring system attached to them and you record your scores, you are introducing an element of pressure into your practice. This is the best way to determine whether or not

your practice is actually helping you.

Players who struggle with competitive drills might also need to add mental skills training to develop confidence, focus and resilience.

If you are like most players and only ever practise in the technical mode, you'll be much more likely to improve and be able to take those improvements to the golf course if you spend a third of your practice time in each of the three modes: one third technical, one third variation and one third competitive.

The other aspect to the *Rule of Thirds Practice* is to spread your practice time across the different areas of your game. Spend one third of your practice time on full shots, one third on short game shots and one third on putting.

Your total practice time is actually being divided into ninths. You'll spend one third of your putting practice time on putting technique, one third on variation and one third on competitive drills. Do the same for the short game and long game as well.

If you've never practised this way before, and that will probably be every reader, then you have just been introduced to a way of practising that is almost guaranteed to bring better results for you.

So, write up your practice plan, get stuck into it and watch your scores and handicap come down. ●

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