



TAKE YOUR PRACTICE FORM TO THE COURSE

AFTER practising all week on the driving range, you're hitting good shots one shot after the other and then doing the same prior to your round. You can't wait to get on the course – you are sure you are about to smash your handicap and post your personal best score. By the time you get to the back nine, those feelings of certainty about a great score you had on the 1st tee have all gone.

The reason this happens is that for most players, practice and play are completely different things. When practising, most players hit lots of shots with one club to one target. This is great for building rhythm, but is not easily transferred to the course.

In order to be able to take your practice form to the golf course, you need to make your practice more like what happens on the course. The best way to do this is to introduce variety and challenge to your practice.

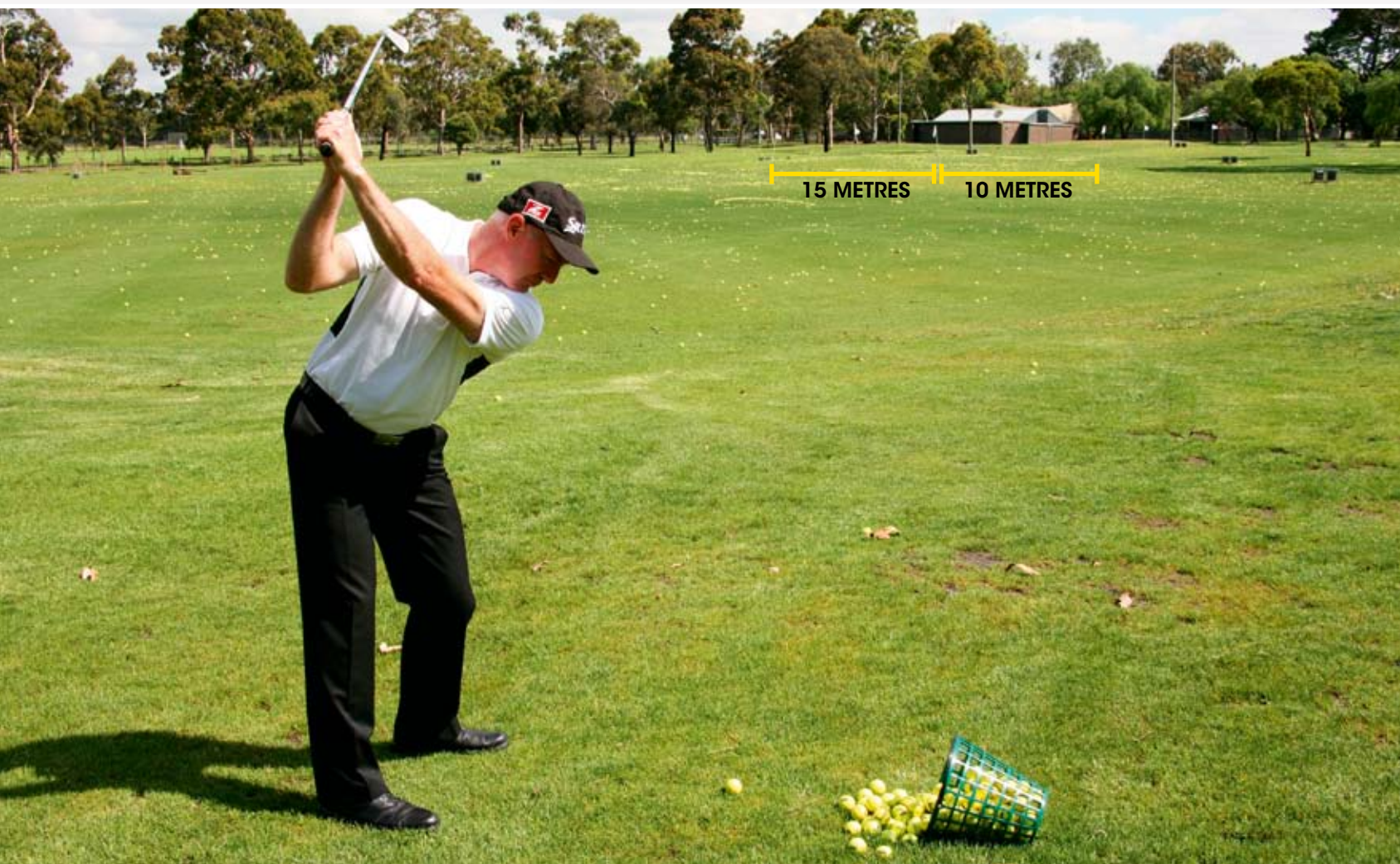
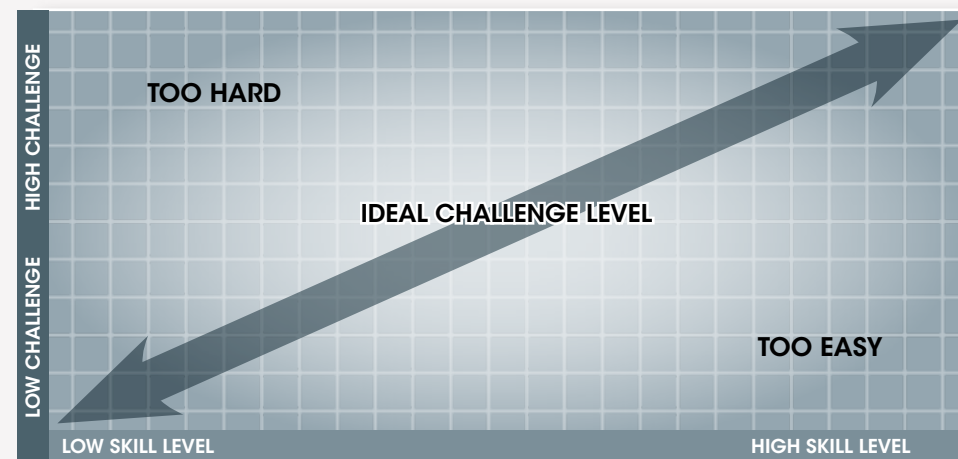
Hitting the same shot repeatedly is termed 'blocked' practice. This type of practice has its place when you are learning a new pattern

for your swing; for example, changing your backswing path. However, once the pattern has been practised so it is relatively stable, then it needs to be tested by making the same movement with other clubs and other shot types. Varying the club used, the target or the shot shape is called 'random' practice.

Random practice doesn't allow you to

develop the same rhythm that comes from hitting one shot after the other with the same club. You need to re-establish the rhythm on each shot with random practice. While this is a challenge, it is exactly what happens on the course.

When you do random practice, you will hit fewer shots per session and may even feel that



the session wasn't productive because you didn't settle into a comfortable rhythm and may not have hit the ball well. Over time, however, this type of practice will serve you much better in transferring your play to the golf course.

To provide interest and stimulation in practice, you need to create challenges for yourself. The level of challenge needs to be appropriate for your skill level. If the challenge is too great, you are likely to give up. If it is too easy, you are likely to become bored. Depending on your skill level, the challenge will differ as the table here shows.

Set challenges in practice. For example if you are practising your chipping, create a ring around the hole with six or eight tees. Depending on your skill level, the diameter of the circle will vary. Use the table on this page to set your challenge for a 10- to 20-metre chip shot.

Hit 10 chip shots to the target area, which corresponds to your handicap. Once you are able to hit seven to 10 shots into the target area on a consistent basis, then advance to the next smaller circle. This provides an incentive to improve and raises the challenge level.

Taking this approach with all of your short-game shots, full shots and putting will make your practice more like playing. It will also mean you are gaining far more from your practice and will improve the transfer of those skills learned in practice to the golf course.

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10 to 20 METRE CHIP SHOT

Your handicap	0-4	5-9	10-18	19-27	28-36	36+
Target diameter	2m	2.4m	2.8m	3.2m	3.6m	4m



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