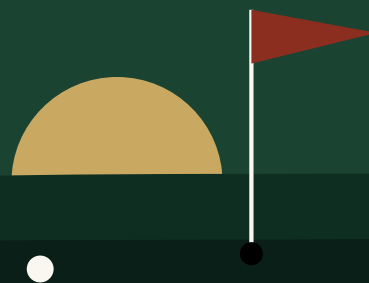


TEEeachAbles

The Complete Beginner's Playbook to Golf

*From the parking lot to the 18th green —
everything no one ever tells you.*



Welcome to the First Tee

If you have ever stood at the edge of a golf course, gear in the trunk, stomach in a knot, wondering whether you're about to embarrass yourself — this book is for you.

Golf is a sport with a 600-year-old etiquette code that nobody hands you at the door. Most beginners learn it the hard way: a withering look from a stranger, a starter's sigh, a playing partner who stops giving them tips. This guide skips all of that.

Inside, you'll find the practical knowledge a confident golfer carries in their head: what to wear, what every club does, when to use which wedge, how to behave on the course, what to say (and not say), and exactly how a round flows from the moment you pull into the lot. By the time you finish, you'll walk onto any course in the country looking and acting like you belong.

How to use this book

Read Parts I–III before your first round. Skim Part IV the morning of. Print the Appendix cheat sheets and tuck them into your bag — they're designed to be referenced on the course.

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Why Golf Feels Intimidating (and Why It Won't After This)

Most sports are built around equipment everyone understands. A basketball is a basketball. A tennis racket is a tennis racket. Golf hands you fourteen different tools, fourteen different angles, an unwritten dress code, a vocabulary of about 200 words, and an expectation that you already know how to behave around all of it.

That gap — between what beginners are told and what they are expected to know — is what makes the first round terrifying. It is not the swing. The swing is the easiest part to forgive. Other golfers will happily watch you shank a 7-iron sideways into a tree. What they will not forgive is talking during their backswing, walking across their putting line, or showing up in cargo shorts and a t-shirt.

This book closes that gap. It is the conversation a patient older brother who has played for 20 years would have with you in the parking lot before your first round. Nothing skipped. Nothing assumed.

What you will walk away knowing:

- The exact dress code that gets you through the door at any public or private course.
- How to time your arrival so you're relaxed, warmed up, and ready when the starter calls your name.
- What every club in the bag does — including the loft angle and approximate distance for each.
- When to reach for a pitching wedge vs. a sand wedge vs. a lob wedge (this trips up almost every beginner).
- The ten unspoken etiquette rules that tell experienced players whether they want to play with you again.
- How to handle lost balls, water hazards, and bad holes without slowing down the group.
- A 30-day practice plan to be physically and mentally ready for your first 18 holes.

PRO TIP

If you only have 30 minutes before your first round, jump to **Chapter 9** (etiquette) and **Appendix B** (the Etiquette Quick Card). Those two pages alone will keep you from making the mistakes that mark someone as a brand-new golfer.



PART I

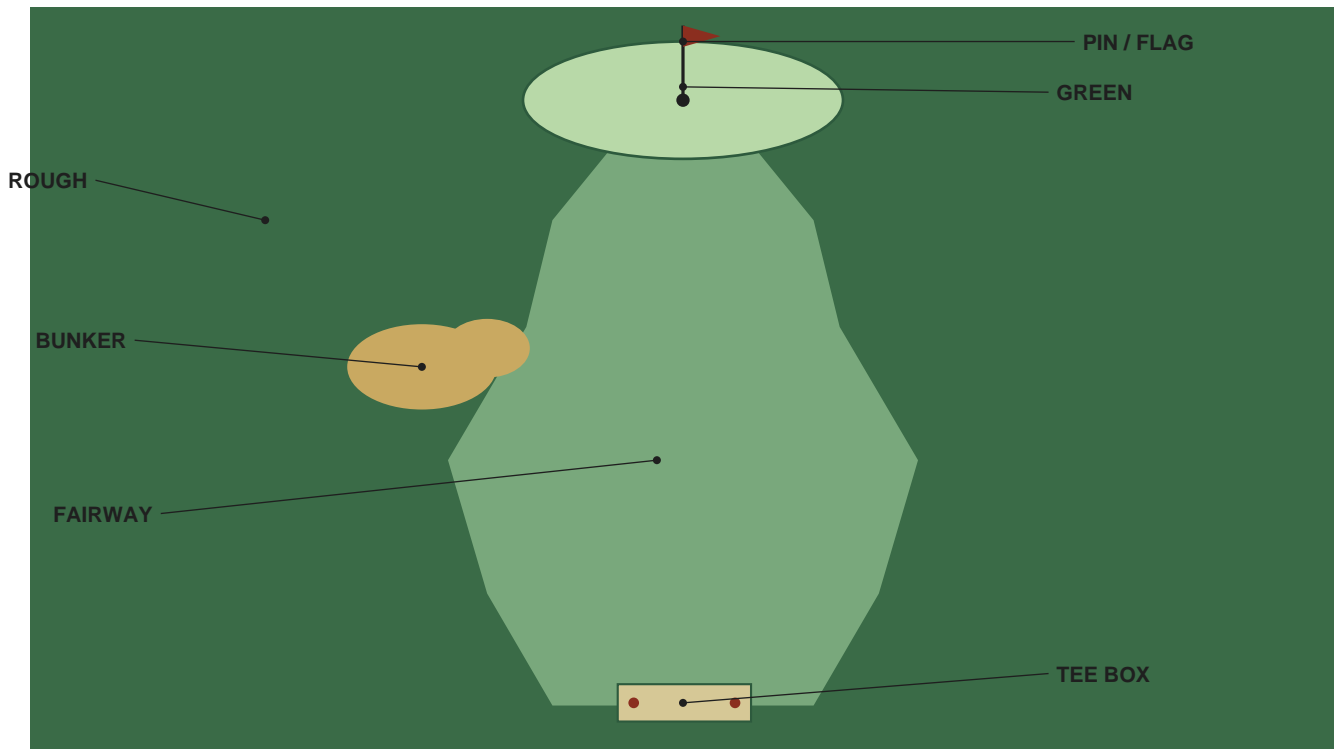
Before You Ever Swing a Club

CHAPTER 1

Understanding the Golf Course

Before you can play a course, you need to read one. A standard course has 18 holes. Each hole is its own little world — a starting point, a target, and a series of obstacles in between. Knowing the parts of a hole will help you make smarter decisions about which club to use and where to aim.

The Anatomy of a Hole



- **Tee Box** — The starting area. A flat, mowed rectangle with markers (usually colored blocks or stones) showing where you must place your ball. You always start a hole here.
- **Fairway** — The wide, short-mowed strip of grass running from the tee toward the green. This is where you want your ball to land off the tee.
- **Rough** — The longer grass on either side of the fairway. Your ball is harder to hit cleanly out of the rough; expect less distance and less control.
- **Hazards** — Bunkers (sand traps) and water (ponds, creeks, lakes). Both add penalty strokes if you can't play out of them.
- **Green** — The smooth, very short-mowed circle around the hole. This is where you putt.
- **Pin / Flag / Cup** — The flag marks the cup (the actual hole). The cup is 4.25 inches wide.
- **Cart Path** — A paved or gravel path for golf carts. Stay on it when required.

Par 3, Par 4, Par 5

Every hole has a **par** — the number of strokes a skilled golfer is expected to take to finish that hole. Par includes two putts on the green, so the tee-to-green portion is (par minus 2) shots.

| Par | Typical Length | Tee-to-Green Shots | What It Looks Like |
|-------|----------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Par 3 | 100–250 yards | 1 shot to reach the green | One iron or wedge off the tee, then putt. |
| Par 4 | 250–470 yards | 2 shots to reach the green | A drive, then an approach to the green. |
| Par 5 | 470–600+ yards | 3 shots to reach the green | Drive, layup, then a wedge approach. |

Front 9, Back 9, and the Turn

A standard round is 18 holes, divided into the **front 9** (holes 1–9) and the **back 9** (holes 10–18). After hole 9, most courses route you back near the clubhouse for a quick break — this is called **making the turn**. You can grab a snack, refill water, and use the restroom. Don't linger more than five or ten minutes; the group behind you is on the clock.

Total Course Par

Most 18-hole courses have a total par of **70, 71, or 72**. A typical layout has four par 3s, ten par 4s, and four par 5s. "Shooting par" means finishing 18 holes in exactly that many strokes — a goal that takes most golfers years to reach. Beginners often shoot 100–120 for their first many rounds. That is completely normal.

PRO TIP

On the scorecard, look for the **Yardage** column matched to the tee box you're playing from (usually red, gold, white, blue, or black). New players almost always play from the forward or middle tees. It's not embarrassing — it's smart. The course is more fun when you can reach the greens.

CHAPTER 2

The Language of Golf

Golfers talk in shorthand. If someone says “I was 3-over making the turn after a triple, but I stuck a wedge to two feet on 12 for a kick-in birdie,” you should be able to nod along.

Scoring Terms (Memorize These)

| Term | Meaning |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ace / Hole-in-One | Sinking your tee shot in one stroke (almost always on a par 3). |
| Albatross / Double Eagle | Three strokes under par on a hole. Extremely rare. |
| Eagle | Two strokes under par. |
| Birdie | One stroke under par. |
| Par | Even with par. |
| Bogey | One stroke over par. |
| Double Bogey | Two strokes over par. |
| Triple Bogey | Three strokes over par. |
| Snowman | An 8 on a single hole — looks like a snowman. Slang for a blow-up hole. |

Shot-Shape and Miss Terms

- **Slice** — A shot that curves sharply from left to right (for a right-handed golfer). The most common beginner miss.
- **Hook** — A shot that curves sharply from right to left.
- **Fade** — A controlled, gentle left-to-right curve. Intentional.
- **Draw** — A controlled, gentle right-to-left curve. Intentional.
- **Fat / Chunked** — You hit the ground before the ball. The shot comes up short.
- **Thin / Bladed** — You hit the equator of the ball. It rockets low and long.
- **Topped** — You hit the very top of the ball. It dribbles forward.
- **Shank** — You hit the ball with the hosel (the joint between the shaft and the head). The ball flies hard right. Painful.

- **Skull** — A wedge or chip hit thin that flies over the green.
- **Duff** — Catch-all for any badly mishit shot.

Course and Situation Terms

- **Lie** — The position your ball ended up in (good lie, bad lie, fluffy lie, tight lie).
- **Pin / Flagstick** — The flag in the hole.
- **Pin High** — Your ball is even with the flag in distance, just left or right.
- **Up and Down** — Getting from off the green into the hole in just two shots (one chip + one putt).
- **Layup** — Intentionally hitting a shorter shot to set up a better next one.
- **Approach** — Any shot intended to land on the green.
- **Chip** — A short, low shot from just off the green.
- **Pitch** — A higher, softer shot from a bit farther off the green.
- **Lag Putt** — A long putt where your goal is to leave it close, not necessarily make it.
- **Gimme** — A short putt your group agrees you don't have to actually hit. Common in casual play.
- **Mulligan** — A do-over. Not allowed in real golf, but common among friends.
- **Honors** — The right to tee off first because you had the lowest score on the previous hole.

Don't worry about memorizing every term tonight

Most of this vocabulary will absorb naturally over your first five rounds. The Glossary in Appendix C is a quick reference whenever you hear something unfamiliar.



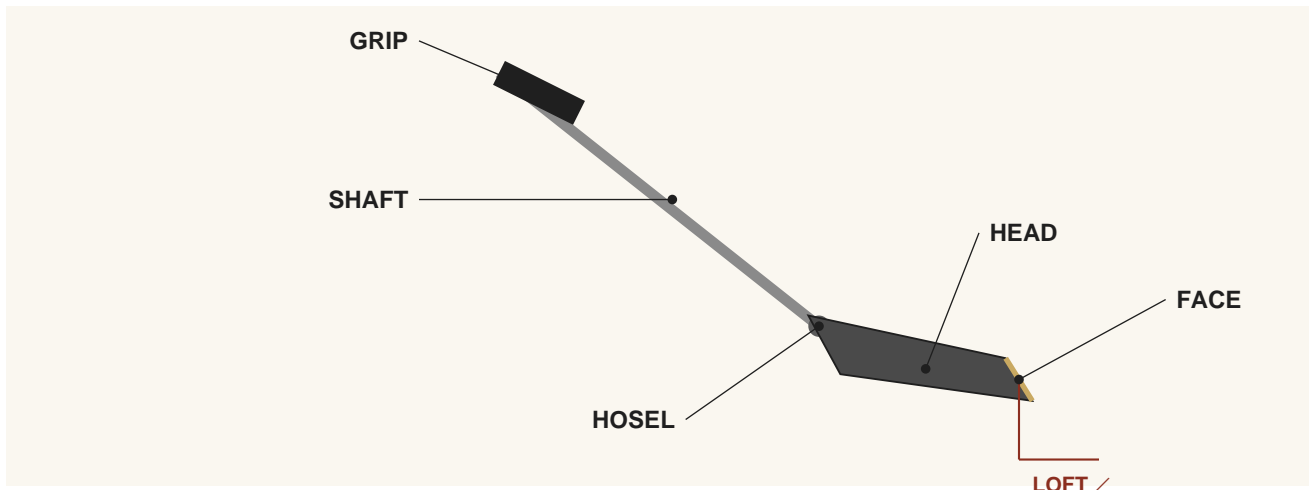
PART II

The Clubs: Your Toolkit

CHAPTER 3

Anatomy of a Golf Club

Every club in your bag is built from the same four parts. Understanding them helps every other chapter in this book make sense.



- **Grip** — The rubber wrap at the top of the club. This is the only part of the club you actually touch. Worn grips slip and ruin shots; replace them every couple of seasons.
- **Shaft** — The long tube. Comes in steel (heavier, more control — standard in irons and wedges) and graphite (lighter, more distance — standard in drivers and woods, often used in irons by seniors and women).
- **Hosel** — The joint where the shaft meets the head. If you hit the ball off the hosel, you've shanked it.
- **Head** — The metal piece that strikes the ball. Each type of club has a different shape.
- **Face** — The flat (or grooved) striking surface of the head. Where ball meets club.

Two Words That Decide Everything: Loft and Lie

Loft is the angle of the clubface relative to the shaft. It is the single most important number on a club. **More loft = higher ball flight + shorter distance.** Less loft = lower flight + longer distance. A driver has about 9–12 degrees of loft. A lob wedge has 60. That's the entire reason you carry 14 different clubs — you're really carrying 14 different launch angles.

Lie angle is the angle the shaft makes with the ground when the club sits properly. It mostly matters for fitting the club to your height, and you don't need to think about it at all in your first year. Just know the term.

If you remember one thing from this chapter

Loft equals trajectory. The bigger the loft number on the bottom of a club, the higher and shorter the ball will fly. This is why you don't use a driver to chip from 30 yards out, and you don't use a sand wedge to hit a 230-yard tee shot.

CHAPTER 4

The 14-Club Bag Explained

Golf's rules let you carry up to 14 clubs in your bag. A typical bag is built like this:

Anatomy of a 14-Club Bag

| Woods | Hybrids | Irons | Wedges | Putter |
|--------|----------|-------|--------|--------|
| Driver | 4-Hybrid | 6 | PW | Putter |
| 3-Wood | 5-Hybrid | 7 | GW | |
| | | 8 | SW | |
| | | 9 | LW | |

| Category | Typical Clubs | Purpose |
|---------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Driver | 1 club | Longest shot off the tee on par 4s and par 5s. |
| Fairway Woods | 3-wood, sometimes 5-wood | Long shots from the tee or fairway. |
| Hybrids | 3- or 4-hybrid | Replace hard-to-hit long irons. Forgiving. |
| Irons | 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 | Approach shots from the fairway. Most-used clubs in your bag. |
| Wedges | PW, GW, SW, LW | Short approaches, chips, bunker shots, lob shots. |
| Putter | 1 club | Used on the green. Used more than any other club. |

The Driver — Your Longest Club

The driver has the largest head, the longest shaft, and the lowest loft (typically 9–12°). It is designed to launch the ball as far as possible, almost always off a tee. A solid amateur drive is 200–240 yards; a strong amateur hits 250–280; tour pros average 295+. It is also the hardest club in the bag to hit consistently. Many beginners swing it on every par 4 out of habit — don't. If you can't put it in play, take a 3-wood or hybrid instead.

Fairway Woods — The Long Approach Specialists

A 3-wood (about 15°) hits roughly 210–230 yards for an average golfer; a 5-wood (about 18°) hits 195–210. They can be hit from the tee or from the fairway. They are easier to control than a driver, so

many beginners use a 3-wood off the tee until they're comfortable with the driver.

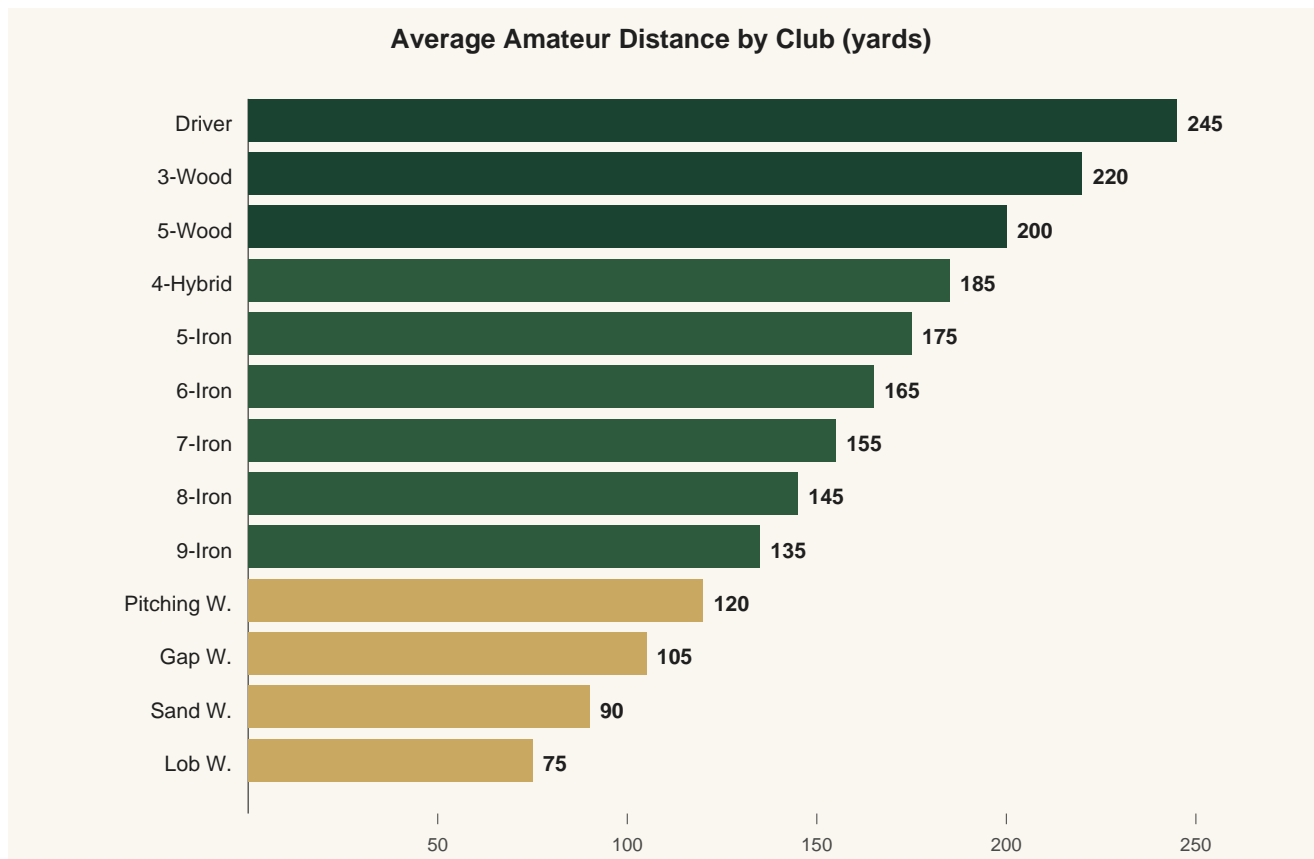
Hybrids — The Forgiveness Clubs

A hybrid (sometimes called a “rescue”) blends a wood-like head with iron-like length and loft. They're built to replace the hardest irons to hit — the 3-iron, 4-iron, and sometimes 5-iron. If you're a beginner, carry hybrids. They are kinder, more forgiving, and easier to hit out of the rough.

Irons — The Workhorses

Numbered 3 through 9 (though most beginners carry only 5–9). Higher number = more loft = higher and shorter shot. Each iron is designed for a specific distance, with about 10–15 yards between consecutive numbers. Almost every approach shot from the fairway is hit with an iron or a wedge.

Average Distances by Club (Right-Handed Amateur Male, Range)



| Club | Loft | Beginner Distance | Average Amateur |
|--------|-------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Driver | 9–12° | 180–220 yds | 230–260 yds |
| 3-Wood | 15° | 170–200 yds | 210–235 yds |

| Club | Loft | Beginner Distance | Average Amateur |
|----------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 5-Wood | 18° | 160–185 yds | 190–215 yds |
| 3-Hybrid | 19° | 155–180 yds | 185–210 yds |
| 4-Hybrid | 22° | 150–170 yds | 175–195 yds |
| 5-Iron | 27° | 140–160 yds | 170–185 yds |
| 6-Iron | 30° | 130–150 yds | 160–175 yds |
| 7-Iron | 34° | 120–140 yds | 150–165 yds |
| 8-Iron | 38° | 110–130 yds | 140–155 yds |
| 9-Iron | 42° | 100–120 yds | 130–145 yds |
| Pitching Wedge | 44–48° | 85–110 yds | 115–130 yds |
| Gap Wedge | 50–52° | 70–95 yds | 100–115 yds |
| Sand Wedge | 54–56° | 55–80 yds | 85–100 yds |
| Lob Wedge | 58–60° | 40–65 yds | 70–85 yds |

Distances are personal

Every golfer's numbers are different. Spend a session at a driving range with a launch monitor (or just count fence markers) and write down YOUR average distance for each club. Tape that list to the side of your bag. It will save more strokes than any swing tip ever will.

A Sample 14-Club Beginner Bag

- Driver
- 3-Wood
- 4-Hybrid
- 5-Hybrid
- 6-Iron, 7-Iron, 8-Iron, 9-Iron
- Pitching Wedge (PW)
- Gap Wedge (52°)
- Sand Wedge (56°)
- Lob Wedge (60°) — optional for beginners
- Putter

That's 13. Add either a 5-wood or another hybrid for the 14th. You can play with fewer than 14 — many beginners start with a half set of 7–9 clubs and do just fine.

CHAPTER 5

The Wedge Family — Your Scoring Clubs

Most amateur strokes are lost inside 100 yards. Wedges are the clubs that decide whether you shoot 90 or 105. There are four of them, and each one has a job.

The Four Wedges



| Wedge | Loft | Typical Distance | Primary Job |
|---------------------|--------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pitching Wedge (PW) | 44–48° | 100–130 yds | Full approach shots, long chips with roll-out. |
| Gap Wedge (GW / AW) | 50–52° | 85–110 yds | Fills the 'gap' between PW and SW. Three-quarter approaches. |
| Sand Wedge (SW) | 54–56° | 70–95 yds | Bunker shots; soft pitches from rough; 60–100 yd approaches. |
| Lob Wedge (LW) | 58–62° | 40–75 yds | High, soft shots that stop fast. Tight pin positions. Flop shots. |

When to Use Which Wedge

Beginners constantly grab the wrong wedge — usually the sand wedge for everything because the name sounds versatile. Here's a clearer mental model.

PW — The “Full Swing” Wedge

Use it when you have a clean lie and need 100–130 yards. Also good for low “bump and run” chips when you have lots of green to work with. The ball will fly low and roll a long way.

Gap Wedge — The Missing Link

Every wedge in your bag is about 4–6° apart. Without a gap wedge, you have to either kill a sand wedge or take pace off a pitching wedge — both lead to inconsistent distance. Carry one. Use it for 90–110 yard approaches and longer chips around the green when you have moderate green to land on.

Sand Wedge — The Bunker Specialist

Designed with extra **bounce** (a downward angle on the sole of the club) so it skips through sand instead of digging. Use it for: every bunker shot, soft pitches from thick rough around the green, and approaches from 70–95 yards.

PRO TIP

Bunker basics: Open the clubface (rotate it so it points more toward the sky). Aim about 2 inches BEHIND the ball. Swing through the sand — the sand carries the ball out, not the clubface. Don't decelerate. Most beginners chunk bunker shots because they slow down at impact, afraid of hitting too hard.

Lob Wedge — The Specialist Tool

The lob wedge launches the ball almost vertically and stops it almost dead on the green. Use it when you have a tight pin position with very little green to work with, when you must clear a hazard or bunker with no roll-out, or when you need to escape from deep rough. It is also the hardest wedge to hit cleanly. Beginners can leave the lob wedge out of the bag for the first season — you can do almost everything it does with a sand wedge and a different swing.

The Wedge Decision Tree (around the green)

- 1. How much green is between my ball and the hole?** Lots = lower-lofted club (PW). A little = higher-lofted club (SW or LW).
- 2. Is there a hazard or fringe to clear?** If yes, use more loft to fly over it. If no, a low chip with a PW or even an 8-iron is more reliable.
- 3. What's the lie?** Sitting up nicely in fairway grass = any wedge. Buried in rough = SW or LW with an open face. In sand = SW.
- 4. How much room do I have to land the ball softly?** Lots = PW or GW (let it roll). Little = SW or LW (land soft, stop fast).

Rule of thumb: “Lowest club that gets the job done.”

A bumped 8-iron from the fringe is easier to control than a flopped lob wedge. When in doubt, take less loft and let the ball roll like a putt. Save the high, soft shots for situations that actually demand them.

Wedge Bounce — The Number No One Explains

Look at the sole of any wedge and you'll see two numbers stamped on it, like “56.10.” The first number is loft (56°). The second is **bounce** (10°) — the angle between the leading edge and the lowest point of the sole. **High bounce (10–14°)** works best in soft sand and fluffy grass. **Low bounce (4–8°)** works best on tight, firm lies and hard sand. If you're only buying one set of wedges, mid-bounce (8–10°) is the safest choice.

CHAPTER 6

The Putter

The putter is used on roughly 40% of all your strokes in a round. A bad putter and a great driver is a recipe for frustration. A great putter and an okay driver is a recipe for low scores.

Two Main Putter Styles

- **Blade** — The classic, slim, T-shaped head. Less forgiving but offers a great feel. Preferred by golfers with smooth, arcing strokes.
- **Mallet** — A larger, heavier head, often half-circle or fang-shaped. More forgiving on off-center strikes and better for golfers who tend to push or pull putts. **Recommended for beginners.**

Putter Length and Grip

Standard putters are 33–35 inches. Stand naturally with your eyes directly over the ball; the putter shaft should reach your hands without you having to slouch or stretch. Most beginners use a **reverse overlap** grip (right hand low for righties, with the left index finger draped over the right hand). Cross-handed (left hand low) is increasingly popular and helps prevent flipping the wrists.

Putting Fundamentals

1. **Eyes over the ball.** If you can drop a ball from your nose and it lands on top of your golf ball, your stance is correct.
2. **Quiet hands, quiet wrists.** The stroke is powered by your shoulders rocking back and through. Your wrists do not flick.
3. **Even tempo.** Same length back as through. Same speed back as through.
4. **Look at the ball, not the hole.** Pick your line, then trust it.
5. **Keep your head still until you hear the ball drop.** Lifting up early is the #1 cause of pulled putts.

PRO TIP

On putts longer than 20 feet, your goal isn't to make it — it's to leave it inside a 3-foot circle around the hole. This is called **lag putting**. Master it and you'll cut 5–10 strokes off your score immediately. Three-putts kill more rounds than bad drives.

Reading Greens — The Basics

Every green has slope. Putts break (curve) toward the lower side. Look at the green from behind your ball, from behind the hole, and from the side. Notice where water would drain to — that's where your putt

will roll.

- **Uphill putts** need to be hit firmer; they break less.
- **Downhill putts** are softer; they break more. Be careful — these are how you three-putt.
- **Grain** (the direction grass grows) affects break and speed, especially on Bermuda greens. Putts hit “down-grain” roll faster.
- **The first six inches before the hole** is where most of the break happens, because the ball is slowest there.



PART III

Etiquette: The Unwritten Rules

CHAPTER 7

Dress Code Decoded

Walking up to the pro shop in the wrong clothes is the fastest way to get turned away — or to spend \$90 on a course-branded shirt at the last minute. Read this page before your first round.

The Universal Public-Course Dress Code

Every public course in America accepts the following. If you wear this, you'll be fine anywhere outside of the most exclusive private clubs.

MEN

- **Shirt:** Collared polo, OR a mock-neck collar, OR a quarter-zip golf pullover. Tucked in.
- **Bottoms:** Golf pants or golf shorts (cotton or performance fabric). Shorts should hit at or just above the knee.
- **Shoes:** Golf shoes (soft spikes only — metal spikes are banned at almost every modern course). Athletic sneakers are okay at very casual courses if you don't own golf shoes yet.
- **Socks:** Crew or ankle socks. Avoid no-show socks if you're self-conscious about tan lines.
- **Hat (optional):** Baseball cap, bucket hat, or visor. **Brim forward.** Backwards hats are frowned upon at traditional clubs.
- **Belt:** Required if you're wearing pants or shorts with belt loops.

WOMEN

- **Shirt:** Collared polo, sleeveless golf top with a collar or modest neckline, or quarter-zip pullover.
- **Bottoms:** Golf skort, golf shorts, golf skirt (mid-thigh or longer), or golf pants. Athletic leggings are accepted at most public courses but not at traditional clubs.
- **Shoes:** Women's golf shoes with soft spikes.
- **Hat (optional):** Visor, baseball cap, or sun hat.

■ What gets you turned away

Jeans • Cargo shorts • Athletic shorts (basketball, gym, running) • Cargo pants • Tank tops • T-shirts (any kind) • Crop tops • Swimsuits • Tennis shoes with metal cleats • Football jerseys • Anything ripped or torn • Sweatpants • Open-toed shoes or sandals.

Private and Country Club Codes (Stricter)

Private clubs may add: shirts must be tucked in at all times; no logos larger than the club's own; no quarter-zips in the dining room; jackets required after a certain hour; men must remove hats indoors. If you're invited as a guest at a private club, ask the member to forward you the dress code, or call the pro shop the day before. They will not be annoyed — they'll be impressed you asked.

Hat Etiquette

- Hats are **off** indoors — in the clubhouse, the pro shop, the bar, the restaurant. Always.
- Hats are **off** when shaking hands at the end of the round on the 18th green. This is a sign of respect.
- Hats are **off** during the national anthem and during a moment of silence.
- Brim forward at all times. Backwards hats read as disrespectful at traditional clubs.

Weather-Appropriate Gear

- **Cold weather:** Layers. Long-sleeve base layer + golf polo + quarter-zip + golf vest or jacket. Golf gloves with grip texture for both hands.
- **Rain:** Rain pants and a waterproof jacket designed for golf (regular raincoats restrict your swing). A second towel and a second glove kept dry in a plastic bag.
- **Heat:** Light-colored polo, performance fabric, sun sleeves, sunscreen on neck and ears, a wide-brim hat. Drink water at every tee box.

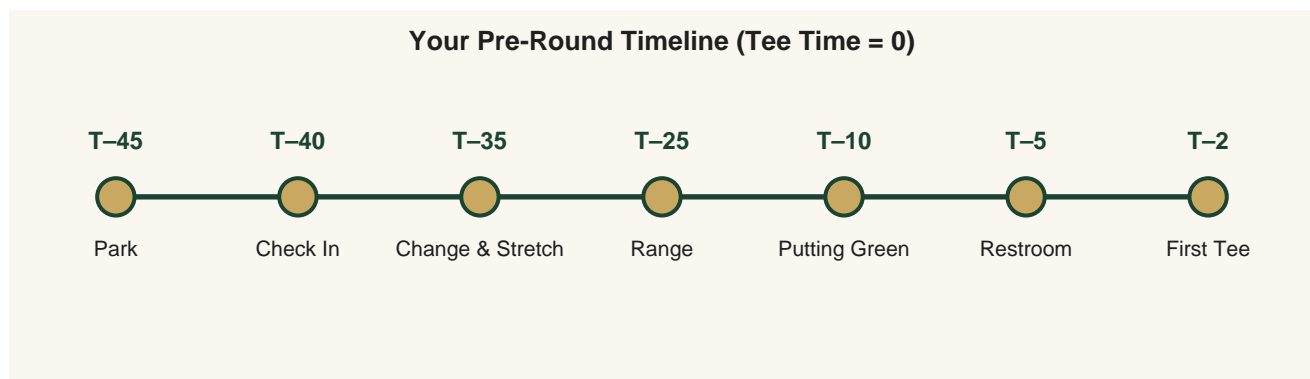
CHAPTER 8

Arrival & Pre-Round Protocol

How you handle the first 45 minutes at the course says more about you as a golfer than your first tee shot. Here's the exact sequence.

When to Arrive

30–45 minutes before your tee time. That gives you time to check in, change shoes, hit the restroom, warm up, and get to the first tee with five minutes to spare. Showing up late stresses out the starter, throws off the next group, and ruins your own headspace.



| Time Before Tee Time | What You're Doing |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T- 45 min | Pull into the lot. Bag drop (if available). Park. |
| T- 40 min | Check in at the pro shop. Pay green fees. Get scorecard, pencil, tees. |
| T- 35 min | Change shoes (locker room or by your car). Stretch. |
| T- 25 min | Hit the driving range — start with wedges, work up through irons to driver, then back down. |
| T- 10 min | Putting green. 5–7 minutes of long lag putts and short 3-footers. |
| T- 5 min | Restroom. Refill water. Head to the first tee. |
| T- 2 min | Be on the tee box. Introduce yourself to your group. |

Bag Drop and Valet

Many courses have a **bag drop** at the entrance. A staffer will take your clubs from your car and set them on a cart for you while you park and check in. **Tip \$3–5.**

The Pro Shop — What Happens There

Walk in. Tell the person at the counter your name and tee time (“Hi, I’m Brent, 9:40 tee time.”). They’ll confirm your reservation, take payment, and hand you a scorecard, pencil, and (sometimes) complimentary tees. Ask: “Are we walking or riding? Cart path only today?” Then ask if there are any local rules you should know (some courses give free relief from sprinkler heads or aerated greens).

Cart vs. Walking

Riding in a cart is faster and easier. Two players share a cart; expect to switch driving every few holes. **Walking** is the traditional, more athletic experience. You can rent a push cart (walking trolley) or carry your bag with a stand-bag. Walking is allowed at almost every course but may not be allowed in peak summer afternoons for pace-of-play reasons. Cart fees usually run \$15–25 per player.

Tipping at the Course

| Service | Standard Tip |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Bag drop staff | \$3–5 |
| Cart attendant (cleans your clubs after) | \$5–10 |
| Beverage cart server (per round) | \$3–5 per visit |
| Caddie (private club) | \$50–100+ per bag |
| Locker room attendant (private club) | \$5–10 |

The starter is your friend

The **starter** is the person who runs the first tee. They’ll call your name, check you in, and send you off. Be friendly. Ask any last-minute question. They’ve seen every kind of beginner — they’re not judging you. A small tip (\$5) is welcome but not required at public courses.

Range and Putting Green Warm-Up

Your warm-up isn’t a workout. It’s a tune-up. **Don’t hit a full bucket of drivers.** Start with your wedges to wake up your tempo, work up through 8-iron, 6-iron, hybrid or 3-wood, then a few drivers, then end with the same wedge you started with to reset your rhythm. 25–30 balls is plenty.

Spend at least five minutes on the putting green. Hit a handful of long putts to get a feel for the speed of the day’s greens. Then end with five or six 3-foot putts to walk to the first tee feeling confident.

CHAPTER 9

On-Course Etiquette — The Golden Rules

If you read only one chapter in this book, read this one. Etiquette is what separates a welcome guest from a player nobody wants in their group again.

The Five Most-Broken Rules — Don't Be That Person



Silence

while others swing



FORE!

if ball goes near



Pace

keep up with group ahead



Repair

divots, marks, bunkers



Lines

stay off putt lines

Rule 1: Silence and Stillness When Others Are Hitting

From the moment a playing partner stands over the ball to the end of their swing, you are **silent** and **still**. No talking. No whispering. No reaching into your bag. No moving the cart. No checking your phone (the screen movement and click are distracting). Stand outside their peripheral vision — ideally behind them or off to their side, never directly in front of them or directly behind the ball in their line of sight.

Rule 2: Stay Out of Sight Lines

On the green, never stand between a player and the hole, behind the hole on their putting line, or in their peripheral vision as they read the putt. Walk a wide arc to your ball. **Never walk on someone's putting line** — the imaginary line from their ball to the hole. Spike marks and footprints affect roll.

Rule 3: Yell “FORE!” Every Time

If your ball is heading toward another person — in the next fairway, on the green ahead, on the cart path, anywhere — yell “**FORE!**” as loudly as you can. “Fore right” or “Fore left” tells them which way to duck. This is not embarrassing; **not** yelling fore is the embarrassing thing. If someone yells fore at you, instinctively cover your head with your arms and turn away from the call.

Rule 4: Pace of Play — The 4-Hour Round

A round of 18 holes should take about 4 hours, or roughly 13–14 minutes per hole. Your job is to keep up with the group in front of you, not stay ahead of the group behind you. If you can see the group ahead of

you on the next tee, you're fine. If you can't and the group behind you is waiting on every shot, you're slow.

- Be ready to hit when it's your turn. Pull your club, take a practice swing, and visualize while others are hitting.
- If you're struggling on a hole and have hit your limit (more on this below), pick up your ball and move on.
- Look for your ball for no more than **3 minutes** (the official rule). After that, drop another and take the penalty.
- On the green, mark your ball, take your line read, and putt. No need for full pre-shot routines on every putt.
- If your group falls a full hole behind, wave the group behind you through.

Rule 5: Honors — Who Tees Off First

On the first tee, lowest handicap goes first (or whoever volunteers). After that, the player with the **lowest score on the previous hole** earns "honors" and tees off first on the next hole. On the fairway and around the green, the player **farthest from the hole hits first** ("away"). In casual play, "ready golf" — hit when ready, regardless of order — is increasingly common to keep pace.

Rule 6: Repair the Course Behind You

- **Fairway divots:** Replace the chunk of grass you tore out, or fill the hole with the sand-and-seed mix in your cart. Stamp it down.
- **Green ball marks:** When your ball lands on the green from a distance, it leaves a small crater. Repair it with a divot tool or tee — push the edges in toward the center, then tap flat with your putter. Repair yours and one other while you're there.
- **Bunkers:** After your shot, rake the sand smooth. Rake your footprints AND the area where you hit. Leave the rake at the back edge of the bunker, parallel to the line of play (or wherever the local rules say).

Rule 7: Phone Etiquette

Phones are common now — most golfers use a GPS app or rangefinder. The rules: **silent mode the whole round**. No calls on the course. If you must take an emergency call, walk far away from the group. No music speakers unless the entire group agrees AND there's no one nearby. Texting between shots is fine; texting **during** someone's swing is not.

Rule 8: How to Talk on the Course

- **Compliment good shots** with a simple "Great shot" or "Nice ball." Don't over-praise; over-praising sounds insincere.

- **Don't comment on bad shots.** Especially don't offer swing tips unless someone asks for them.
- If a playing partner has a streak of bad luck or shots, give them space. "You've got this" is fine. "You know what you're doing wrong is..." is not.
- **Don't give swing advice** to other adults unless asked. Even if you're right.
- Avoid politics, religion, and money on the course. Stick to the round, the weather, sports, and harmless small talk.
- After a round, the polite question is "How'd you play?" — not "What'd you shoot?"

Rule 9: Alcohol

Beer is part of golf culture. Hard liquor in moderation is fine. **Don't get drunk on the course.** You'll play worse, slow your group down, and embarrass yourself in front of strangers. A reasonable rhythm is one drink per nine holes. If your group includes someone who isn't drinking, don't pressure them.

Rule 10: How to Handle a Mistake

You will hit a terrible shot. You will skull a chip across the green. You will miss a 2-foot putt. Every golfer does this every round. The right reaction: a brief acknowledgment ("Ouch" or a small head shake), and then you move on. **Don't throw clubs. Don't curse loudly. Don't apologize on every shot.** A constant stream of self-criticism is exhausting for your playing partners. Smile, walk to your next shot, and try again.

PRO TIP

After a round, on the 18th green, take off your hat, shake hands with everyone in your group, look them in the eye, and say "Thanks for the round." This 5-second ritual is universal in golf. Skipping it is jarring.

CHAPTER 10

Cart Etiquette & Course Care

Carts are the easiest place to mess up etiquette because most beginners aren't told the rules — they just hop in. Here's what experienced players know.

Cart Path Rules

- **Cart Path Only:** Posted on rainy days or when the course is recovering. You drive only on the paved path — never on the grass. Walk to your ball, pick the club you need (and one extra), and walk back.
- **90-Degree Rule:** Drive on the path until you're even with your ball, then make a 90-degree turn straight to your ball. Hit. Then drive straight back to the path. Minimizes wear on the fairway.
- **Drive Anywhere:** Off the path is fine, but stay 30 yards away from greens and tee boxes. Never drive between a bunker and the green.

Universal Cart Rules

- Two riders maximum. Both feet inside. No standing while moving.
- Stay off the wet grass when possible — tire ruts ruin a course for weeks.
- Pull up to the tee box on the side, not in front of it. Park behind the next group while they hit.
- Park your cart on the side of the green nearest the next tee — it saves time when you're done putting.
- Set the brake when you stop on a slope. Carts roll.

Repairing the Course — The Three Habits

These three habits, done every time, will make every superintendent in America love you.

1. **Replace your divots.** Pick up the chunk of grass, put it back in the hole, press it down with your foot. If your cart has a sand-seed bottle, fill the divot with that mix instead.
2. **Repair ball marks on the green.** Use a divot repair tool. Don't lift the center of the mark — push the edges of the indentation IN toward the middle. Then tap flat with your putter. Takes 5 seconds.
3. **Rake bunkers.** Smooth out your footprints, your divot, and any other rough spots on the way out. Leave the rake the way you found it (most courses ask that you place rakes inside the bunker, parallel to the line of play; some courses ask outside — follow local custom).

The 5-second test

After every shot, ask yourself: "Did I leave this spot the way I found it?" If the answer is no, fix it. Five seconds of effort. A lifetime of being someone other golfers want to play with.



PART IV

How to Actually Play

CHAPTER 11

The Pre-Shot Routine

A pre-shot routine is the same series of actions you do before every shot. It calms your nerves, focuses your mind, and produces more consistent results. Tour pros use one. You should too — and yours doesn't need to be longer than 20 seconds.

The 5-Step Pre-Shot Routine



- 1. Read the situation.** Distance to the target? Wind? Lie? Trouble (water, bunker, OB)? Pin position?
- 2. Pick a club and a target.** Not just “the green” — a specific spot. The flagstick. A patch of grass. A tree on the horizon line.
- 3. Take one practice swing** behind the ball, looking at the target. Feel the swing you want to make.
- 4. Step in.** Set your clubface to the target first, then build your stance around it (feet, hips, shoulders parallel to the target line).
- 5. Pull the trigger.** One look at the target, eyes back to the ball, swing. Don't freeze over the ball — freezing kills shots.

PRO TIP

The 8-second rule. Once you address the ball (set up over it), you have about 8 seconds before tension builds in your hands and shoulders. If you're not ready to swing in that window, back off, reset, and start your routine over.

CHAPTER 12

Course Management for Beginners

Course management is the strategy of golf. It's the difference between a 105 and a 92 with the same swing. Most amateurs lose strokes not because of bad swings, but because of bad decisions.

The Five Rules of Smart Course Management

- 1. Don't always grab the driver.** On tight or short par 4s, a hybrid or 3-wood off the tee leaves you a slightly longer approach but keeps you in play. A bogey from the fairway beats a triple bogey from the trees every time.
- 2. Aim for the middle of the green.** Don't aim at the flag if it's tucked behind a bunker. The middle of the green leaves you a 25-foot putt. The bunker leaves you a sand shot AND a 25-foot putt.
- 3. The 80% rule.** Pick the club that requires you to swing at 80% to reach the target. The 80% swing is more accurate, more consistent, and ends in fewer disasters than the 100% swing.
- 4. Lay up on long par 5s.** If you can't reach in two, leave yourself a comfortable wedge distance (90, 100, or 120 yards) instead of a half-wedge from 60. Full swings are easier to control than half-swings.
- 5. Take your medicine when you're in trouble.** If you're behind a tree, in deep rough, or up against a hazard — the smart play is sideways or backwards into the fairway. The hero shot is how triples become eights.

Picking Your Target

Beginners think “I'm going to hit the fairway.” Better golfers think “I'm going to hit the left edge of that fairway bunker, 230 yards out, with a soft fade.” **Specific targets produce specific results.** Vague targets produce vague swings.

The “Big Miss” Concept

Every golfer has a **big miss** — the worst direction the ball might go on a given swing. For most beginners, the big miss is a slice (right for righties). When you pick your target, account for the big miss. If water is on the right, aim left. If trouble is on the left, aim right. Don't aim straight at trouble and hope.

Two simple stats that will save you 10 strokes a round

Fairways hit: aim to hit at least 5 of 14 fairways (36%). Most beginners hit 0–2. **Three-putt avoidance:** aim to have zero three-putts. Both come from playing for the middle of the fairway and the middle of the green, NOT for the pin.

CHAPTER 13

Reading the Green & Putting Basics

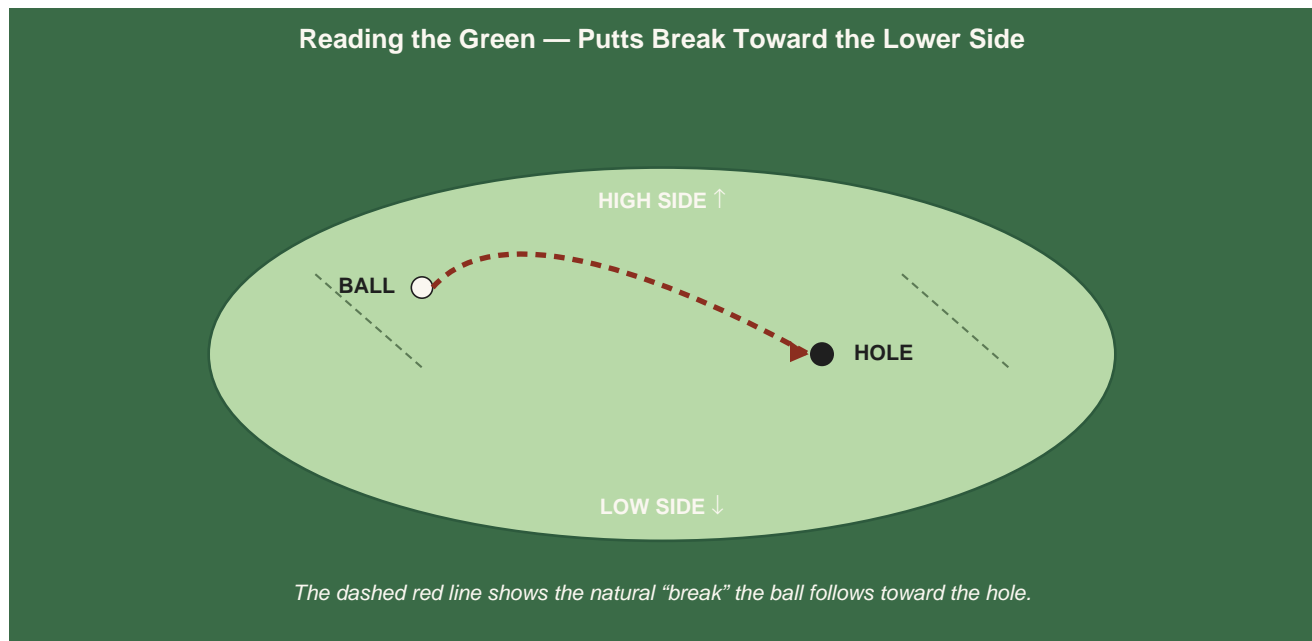
Half of every round happens on the green. Twenty minutes of putting practice will lower your score more than two hours on the driving range.

The Three Things Every Putt Has

- **Distance** — How hard to hit it.
- **Line** — What direction to start it.
- **Speed** — How fast it should be rolling when it gets there.

Distance and speed are the same thing on flat putts. They diverge on uphill (need more pace) and downhill (need less pace) putts.

The 3-Step Green Read



- 1. Walk to the hole from your ball.** While walking, feel the slope through your feet. Are you walking uphill, downhill, or sidehill?
- 2. Crouch behind your ball,** look at the hole. Trace the line you think the ball will travel. Note any obvious left/right slope.
- 3. Walk to the side of the line,** halfway between your ball and the hole. From the side, you can see how much the ball will rise or fall along the way — this tells you speed.

The Beginner's Putting Mantra

Speed beats line. A putt that rolls past the hole at a perfect speed but on the wrong line leaves you a 2-foot comebacker. A putt with the perfect line but the wrong speed can leave you a 20-foot comebacker. Choose speed first; aim second.

PRO TIP

Lag putt drill at home: Set up two coffee cups 6 feet apart on a hardwood floor. Putt back and forth, trying to stop the ball halfway between them. Twenty minutes a week of this drill will dramatically improve your distance control on the course.

CHAPTER 14

When Things Go Wrong

Every golfer hits the ball into the woods, the water, or out of bounds. The rules for handling these situations exist precisely so the round doesn't fall apart.

Lost Ball

If you can't find your ball within **3 minutes** (the official rule changed from 5 minutes in 2019), it's lost. The penalty is **stroke and distance**: you must return to where you hit the previous shot, take a one-stroke penalty, and play again. That means the next shot from the original spot is your third (count: shot 1, penalty stroke, shot 3).

Out of Bounds (OB)

Marked by **white stakes**. If your ball is across or touching the OB line, it's out. Same penalty as a lost ball: stroke and distance. To save time, hit a **provisional ball** from the tee if you suspect your first might be lost or OB — announce "I'm going to hit a provisional" before swinging again.

Penalty Areas (Water, Hazards)

Marked by **yellow or red stakes/lines**. If your ball is in a penalty area, you have several options:

- Play it as it lies (if you can).
- Take a one-stroke penalty and drop within two club-lengths of where the ball entered the hazard, no closer to the hole (red-staked areas only).
- Take a one-stroke penalty and drop on a straight line back from the hole, through the point where the ball entered the hazard (any penalty area).
- Take a one-stroke penalty and replay the previous shot (stroke and distance — always an option).

When to Pick Up

Casual golf isn't a tournament. If you've already hit your **maximum score for the hole** — a common cap is double-par or net double bogey — pick up your ball and move on. Take an X on your scorecard. Your group will appreciate the pace, and you'll save your sanity. Tournament play is different; in casual rounds, picking up is normal and good.

PRO TIP

Carry an extra sleeve of golf balls. **Three sleeves (9 balls)** in your bag at all times. Beginners lose more balls than they expect. Running out mid-round and having to ask the pro shop is awkward.



PART V

The First-Round Playbook

CHAPTER 15

Your First-Round Checklist

Print this page. Bring it. Check off as you go. By the end, the routine will be muscle memory.

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- Confirm tee time, course address, and dress code.
- Charge your phone and any GPS rangefinder.
- Pack your bag: clubs, 9+ golf balls, 20+ tees, divot tool, ball marker, two gloves, towel, water, snack.
- Lay out clothes: collared shirt, golf pants/shorts, belt, golf shoes, hat, weather layers.
- Set an alarm for 90 minutes before tee time (more if you're driving more than 15 minutes).

THE MORNING OF

- Eat a real breakfast — carbs and protein. Hangry golf is bad golf.
- Hydrate before you leave. Bring water + an electrolyte drink.
- Apply sunscreen.
- Leave with at least 45 minutes of buffer before tee time.

AT THE COURSE

- Bag drop or unload at the cart corral.
- Check in at the pro shop. Pay. Get scorecard, pencil, tees.
- Change shoes. Stretch (5 minutes — hip openers, torso rotations, shoulder swings).
- Driving range: 25–30 balls. Wedges → mid irons → long club → wedge again.
- Putting green: 5 long lag putts. Then 5 three-foot putts. Walk away on a make.
- Restroom. Refill water. Head to first tee with 5 minutes to spare.

ON THE FIRST TEE

- Introduce yourself to your group. Shake hands.
- Confirm the tee box you're playing (forward/middle/back).
- Don't swing for the fences — a smooth 80% drive is the right play.
- Whatever happens, smile and walk to your ball.

DURING THE ROUND

- Be ready when it's your turn.
- Stay quiet and still while others hit.
- Fix your divots, ball marks, and bunker tracks.
- Keep up with the group ahead.
- If you're struggling on a hole, pick up after double-par. Move on.
- Drink water every other hole. Eat a snack at the turn.

AFTER THE 18TH

- Hat off. Shake hands with everyone. "Thanks for the round."
- Tip the cart attendant if they clean your clubs.
- Settle any side bets before leaving the green.
- Reflect on what went well — not just what didn't.

CHAPTER 16

12 Beginner Mistakes to Avoid

Every experienced golfer can spot a true beginner from across the fairway. It's not the swing — it's the patterns. Here are the twelve that give you away, and how to avoid each one.

X Showing up late.

Arrive 30–45 minutes early. Period. The starter, the group ahead, and your own nerves all need that buffer.

X Wearing the wrong clothes.

Collared shirt, golf pants/shorts, golf shoes. No jeans, no t-shirts, no athletic shorts.

X Talking during someone's swing.

Even a whisper is too much. Total silence and stillness from address to follow-through.

X Standing in someone's line of sight.

On the green especially. Walk a wide arc to your ball. Never stand directly behind the hole when someone is putting.

X Not yelling FORE.

If your ball goes anywhere near another person, shout it loud and immediately. Embarrassment is much smaller than injury.

X Hitting driver on every par 4.

On short or tight holes, take a 3-wood or hybrid. Hitting the fairway from 200 yards beats hitting trees from 250.

X Aiming at the flag.

Aim for the middle of the green. The flag is a target only after you're a single-digit handicap.

X Searching too long for lost balls.

Three minutes max. Drop another, take the penalty, and keep moving.

X Skipping the pre-shot routine.

Twenty seconds. Read the situation, pick a target, take one practice swing, set up, swing. Every time.

X Not fixing divots, ball marks, or bunkers.

Five seconds of effort per repair. Make it instinctive.

X Throwing or slamming clubs.

Even after a bad shot. Especially after a bad shot. Other golfers notice immediately.

X Forgetting to shake hands at 18.

Hat off, eye contact, "Thanks for the round." Universal in golf. Don't skip it.

CHAPTER 17

A 30-Day Course-Ready Practice Plan

If you have 30 days before your first round, this plan will get you ready. It's built around three weekly sessions: one driving range, one short game, one putting. About 90 minutes per week, total.

WEEK 1 — Get Comfortable Holding a Club

- **Session 1 (Driving range, 45 min):** Hit 50 balls, all with a 7-iron. Don't worry about distance — focus on contact. Half-swings only.
- **Session 2 (Putting green or living room carpet, 20 min):** 50 putts from 5 feet. Eyes over the ball, smooth tempo.
- **Session 3 (Short game area, 30 min):** Practice chipping with a pitching wedge from 10 yards off the green. Land the ball on the green; let it roll.

WEEK 2 — Build Your Swing

- **Session 1 (Driving range, 60 min):** 60 balls. 20 with a wedge, 20 with a 7-iron, 20 with a hybrid or 5-wood. Three-quarter swings.
- **Session 2 (Putting green, 25 min):** 20 putts from 3 feet, then 20 from 10 feet, then 10 lag putts from 30 feet. End on a make.
- **Session 3 (Short game area, 35 min):** Chip from three different distances (5, 15, 30 yards). Use PW for short, 9-iron for medium roll, sand wedge for high stops.

WEEK 3 — Add the Long Clubs

- **Session 1 (Driving range, 60 min):** Walk through every club in your bag. 5–7 balls each. Note the distance you average.
- **Session 2 (Putting green, 25 min):** The “around the world” drill — set 6 balls in a circle 4 feet from the hole. Make all 6 in a row before you stop. Repeat at 6 feet.
- **Session 3 (Short game + bunker, 40 min):** If your range has a practice bunker, hit 20 sand shots. Open the face, aim 2 inches behind the ball, swing through.

WEEK 4 — Course Simulation

- **Session 1 (Driving range, 60 min):** Play “golf” on the range — imagine a full hole. Hit your driver, then change clubs and “approach” the green, then chip. Try to play 9 fake holes.
- **Session 2 (Pitch and Putt or Par 3 course):** Walk 9 holes on a short course. Practice every part of your routine: arrival, pre-shot, etiquette.

- **Session 3 (Putting + chipping, 45 min):** Final tune-up. End on a successful chip or putt. Walk away confident.

PRO TIP

The single most valuable practice you can do isn't at the range — it's walking 9 holes at a short par-3 "pitch and putt" course. You'll hit every kind of shot, develop a real pre-shot routine, and learn pace of play in a low-pressure environment. Two of these in your final two weeks before your first 18-hole round will change everything.



APPENDIX

Printable Cheat Sheets

APPENDIX A

Club Selection & Distance Card

Print this. Tape it inside your bag. Update with your own numbers as you learn them.

| Club | Loft | Use When | My Distance (write in) |
|----------------|--------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Driver | 9–12° | Tee shot on long par 4 / par 5 | _____ yds |
| 3-Wood | 15° | Tight tee shot, long fairway shot | _____ yds |
| 5-Wood | 18° | Long approach, par 5 second shot | _____ yds |
| 3-Hybrid | 19° | Replaces 3-iron; tee shot or fairway | _____ yds |
| 4-Hybrid | 22° | Long approach, easier than long iron | _____ yds |
| 5-Iron | 27° | Approach 160–180 yds | _____ yds |
| 6-Iron | 30° | Approach 150–170 yds | _____ yds |
| 7-Iron | 34° | Approach 140–160 yds ('punch' club) | _____ yds |
| 8-Iron | 38° | Approach 130–150 yds | _____ yds |
| 9-Iron | 42° | Approach 115–140 yds | _____ yds |
| Pitching Wedge | 44–48° | Full approach 100–130; long chips | _____ yds |
| Gap Wedge | 50–52° | Approach 85–110; long pitches | _____ yds |
| Sand Wedge | 54–56° | Bunker shots; pitches 70–95 | _____ yds |
| Lob Wedge | 58–60° | High soft shots; flop shots; tight pins | _____ yds |
| Putter | 3–4° | On the green and just off the fringe | — |

How to find your real distances

Visit a range with marked yardages or use a launch monitor at a fitting bay. Hit 8 shots with each club. Throw out the worst 2 and the best 1. Average the middle 5. THAT is your real distance for that club.

APPENDIX B

Etiquette Quick Card

Tear this out. Tuck it into your golf bag. Read it once before every round.

BEFORE THE ROUND

- Arrive 30–45 min early.
- Collared shirt, golf pants/shorts, golf shoes. Hat brim forward.
- Check in at pro shop. Tip bag drop \$3–5.
- Warm up: range (25–30 balls) + putting green (5 min).
- Be on first tee 5 min before tee time.

ON EVERY SHOT

- Be ready when it's your turn.
- Stand still and silent while others hit. No phone movement.
- Yell FORE if your ball heads anywhere near a person.
- Hat off indoors. Hat off shaking hands.

AROUND THE GREEN

- Never walk on someone's putting line.
- Mark your ball with a coin or marker if it's in someone's line.
- Tend the flag if asked. Pull it carefully so the cup edge isn't damaged.
- Repair your ball mark and one other.
- Park the cart on the side of the green nearest the next tee.

PACE OF PLAY

- Keep up with the group ahead.
- Search no more than 3 minutes for a lost ball.
- If you've double-parred and are still flailing, pick up.
- Wave a faster group through if you fall a hole behind.

AFTER 18

- Hat off. Shake hands. "Thanks for the round."
- Tip cart attendant who cleans your clubs.
- Pay any side bets before leaving the green.

APPENDIX C

Glossary of Golf Terms

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ace | A hole-in-one. |
| Address | The position of standing over the ball, ready to swing. |
| Albatross | Three under par on a single hole. Very rare. |
| Approach | Any shot intended to land on the green. |
| Apron / Fringe | The closely mown grass just off the green. |
| Away | The player farthest from the hole; they hit first. |
| Birdie | One under par on a hole. |
| Bogey | One over par on a hole. |
| Bounce | The angle on the sole of a wedge that prevents digging. |
| Break | The amount a putt curves due to slope. |
| Bunker | A sand-filled hazard. Also called a sand trap. |
| Carry | The distance the ball travels in the air. |
| Chip | A short, low shot from just off the green. |
| Cup | The hole itself — 4.25 inches wide. |
| Divot | A chunk of grass torn out by a clubhead. |
| Double Bogey | Two over par on a hole. |
| Draw | An intentional gentle right-to-left curve (for righties). |
| Drive | A tee shot, usually with a driver. |
| Eagle | Two under par on a hole. |
| Fade | An intentional gentle left-to-right curve (for righties). |
| Fairway | The short-mowed strip between tee and green. |
| Fat | A shot where the club hits the ground before the ball. |
| Flop Shot | A high, soft shot that stops fast on landing. |
| Fore! | The warning shout when a ball heads toward another person. |
| Fringe | The slightly longer grass surrounding the green. |
| Gimme | A short putt conceded without being holed (casual play only). |
| Green | The smooth, very short-mowed area where you putt. |
| Grip | Both the rubber wrap on the club and how you hold it. |

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Handicap | A number representing a golfer's skill; lower is better. |
| Hazard | Water or sand. Costs penalty strokes if you can't play out. |
| Honors | The right to tee off first earned by lowest score on the previous hole. |
| Hook | An unintentional sharp right-to-left curve (for righties). |
| Hybrid | A club blending wood and iron design; replaces long irons. |
| Lag Putt | A long putt aimed at distance control more than holing out. |
| Lie | The position the ball rests in (good lie, bad lie). |
| Loft | The angle of the clubface. More loft = higher, shorter shot. |
| Mulligan | A do-over (casual play only). |
| OB / Out of Bounds | Marked by white stakes; costs stroke and distance. |
| Par | The expected number of strokes for a hole or course. |
| Pin | The flagstick in the hole. |
| Pin High | Even with the flag in distance, just left or right. |
| Pitch | A higher, softer shot from a bit farther off the green. |
| Provisional | A second ball played in case the first is lost or OB. |
| Punch | A low, controlled shot — useful under tree branches. |
| Rough | The longer grass on either side of the fairway. |
| Scratch | A handicap of zero — a player who shoots roughly even par. |
| Shank | A shot off the hosel; flies hard right (for righties). |
| Skull | A wedge or chip hit thin that flies over the green. |
| Slice | An unintentional sharp left-to-right curve (for righties). |
| Snowman | A score of 8 on a single hole. |
| Tee | The peg the ball sits on; also the area you start a hole from ('tee box'). |
| Tempo | The rhythm and pace of your swing. |
| Thin | A shot struck near the equator of the ball; flies low. |
| Triple Bogey | Three over par on a hole. |
| Up and Down | Getting from off the green into the hole in two shots. |
| Whiff | A complete miss — a swing that doesn't touch the ball. Counts as a stroke. |

APPENDIX D

Pre-Round Day-Of Checklist (Printable)

Print this single page. Fill the boxes the morning of your round.

- Confirmed tee time and course address

- Bag packed: 14 clubs, 9+ balls, 20+ tees

- Glove(s) packed — plus a backup

- Divot tool, ball markers, towel

- Water bottle and snack

- Sunscreen, hat, sunglasses

- Wallet for green fees and tips (\$20–40 cash recommended)

- Wearing collared shirt and golf pants/shorts

- Golf shoes (cleats clean)

- Phone charged — GPS app loaded

- Left house with 45+ minute buffer before tee time

- Checked in at pro shop

- Range warm-up complete (25–30 balls)

- Putting green warm-up complete (5+ min)

- Restroom break

- On the first tee 5 min early

- Shook hands with playing partners

Final word

Golf rewards patience and humility. Every great golfer in the world started exactly where you are now — in the parking lot, hands sweaty, hoping not to embarrass themselves. You've done the homework. Walk to the first tee, take a deep breath, swing easy, and have fun out there.

About FairwayReady™

FairwayReady creates clear, no-fluff guides for people stepping into golf for the first time. We believe the sport is more welcoming than its reputation — it just doesn't do a great job of explaining itself to newcomers. Our mission is simple: get you ready for the first tee, on the first try.

Coming next from FairwayReady™:

- **The Driving Range Drill Book** — 25 practice drills to fix a slice, sharpen contact, and build a repeatable swing.
- **The Etiquette Field Guide** — a deeper dive into private club, charity scramble, and league night protocol.
- **The Mental Game for Beginners** — how to stop blowing up after one bad hole.

Thank you for buying this book. If it helped you walk onto your first tee with confidence, please share it with the next beginner you meet — and tell them golf is for them, too.

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