

Pre-shot Routine

The final basic in building a consistent swing is to learn and use the same pre-shot routine every time. Each golfer's routine is unique, but every good routine starts the swing with a consistent rhythm, reduces tension, and aligns the body and club precisely with the chosen target. A good pre-shot routine is as much mental as physical, so the mind must be trained through repetitive practice to focus and relax as the routine takes over. The entire routine should take no more than 30 seconds. If after some time a routine no longer helps focus your mind on the shot, change it slightly to regain your attention. Here is a sample routine that incorporates the key factors.

1. Begin with a physical signal. For example, close the strap on your glove or put your hand on a clubhead to signal your mind to begin focusing on the shot. Start by surveying the extraneous factors that may affect the shot and pick a specific target for aiming.
2. Approach the ball and aim the clubface at the final target or an intermediate target along the same line.
3. Position the right foot to determine the ball's position in the stance.
4. Position the left foot to set stance width and alignment. Once the stance is set, recheck your alignment, and then set the rest of the body along your stance line.
5. Take a deep breath. Exhale. Fill your mind with pictures of the target to remove any negative thoughts, and then begin the swing with a simple, repeatable physical cue, for example, a slight cocking of the right knee that sets the body smoothly into motion.

