

BREAKING

100/90/80/70

SEE YOUR FULL GAME

> Our goal here is to show you that golf is an integrated experience: physical, technical, mental, emotional and social. By taking an expanded view of your game and learning how to visualize, you can get those elements to work together. Players like Annika Sorenstam have used these techniques to have great success. Turn the page and learn how you can, too.

BY LYNN MARRIOTT AND PIA NILSSON
WITH MATTHEW RUDY

Both ranked among Golf Digest's 50 Greatest Teachers, Marriott (*above*) and Nilsson (*below*) run the Vision54 Schools at Legacy Golf Resort in Phoenix. Marriott was the 1992 LPGA National Teacher of the Year; Nilsson was captain of the 1998 European Solheim Cup Team.

To determine if you are right-eye . . .

. . . or left-eye dominant, see page 269.

PULL OUT AND SAVE

It's easy for a player trying to break 100 to get overwhelmed by a lot of technical instruction. A lesson where you're bombarded by mechanical thoughts is a failure, because you can't incorporate so many things into your game at once. We always start our lessons with simple images, like the Ferris wheel and merry-go-round below. Getting a picture in your mind of swinging up and down or more around your body is a much easier and more productive starting point for understanding a swing than specific technical advice about things such as plane and path.



It would drip down close to the ball. That picture also helps with your posture: You need to bend forward at the hips to get your nose over the ball instead of setting up upright.

GOT SOME TISSUE?

It's easy to lose track of your ball position—and when that position changes by an inch or two, it can completely throw off your swing. A great frame of reference to start from for your pitching wedge is to picture yourself with a bad cold.

LEARNING LOFT

To understand the basic relationship between the clubface and the height of your shots, all you need to do is look at the clubface at your finish. Start with a small pitch shot (finishing just above your waist). If you can see the face of the club, your shot will fly high. If the face is turned more around you, the shot will fly on a lower trajectory.



UP AND DOWN VS. AROUND

A driver and a wedge are built completely differently to accomplish different jobs. A driver is longer and flatter, and designed to launch the ball off a tee. A wedge is shorter and more upright, and shot height comes from the loft on the face.

By adapting your setup to the club you're using, you've won half the battle. Using a wedge, picture your swing matching the upright shape of a Ferris wheel (*far left*). With a driver, your swing shape will be more around you, like a merry-go-round (*near left*).



PITCHING 101

On shorter shots, it's tempting to freeze your body and try to make a smaller, arms-only swing. Even though you're hitting a shot 40 or 50 yards, you still should get your whole body involved in the swing. A simple way to visualize a good lower-body motion is to imagine a party hat connected by elastic to your right knee. The tip of that hat should point at your target when you finish your pitch swing.

> The 90 scoring barrier is one that resonates for so many players: When you can consistently shoot in the 80s, you feel you're a good player. The desire to break that scoring goal can do some damaging things to your thought process, though. Instead of focusing so much on things like score and outcome, you need to break it down to a smaller set of decisions that are actually under your control. If you train yourself to try to execute shots according to your plan and let the results take care of themselves, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the outcome. The anxiety about the scoring goal will melt away.

TRAINING YOUR TEMPO

A score comes from executing individual shots, one after the other. To break your score down into those measurable increments, make a second scorecard for your next round. On that card, keep track of your sense of the tempo you had for each full swing. Make a check in the box for each swing you made with great tempo, say 70 percent of full effort. Match the tempo numbers with your score when you finish the round, and you'll see the connection between staying in control and reducing your handicap.

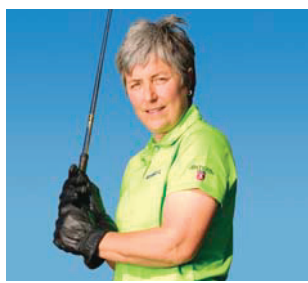
HOLES										10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18									In	Tot	Net															
BLACK										384									159	431	392	533	433	365	189	400	3074	6378								
WHITE										358									157	391	370	493	120	337	177	469	2852	5958								
HANDICAP										10									6	16	12	14	2	18	8	4	9	11	3	15	1	13	17	5	7	
LYNN										5									4	4	3	5														

Name: LYNN										Date:										Playing Focus: 70% TEMPO													
Rate yourself on a scale from 1 (low) to 5 (high) how committed you stayed to your playing focus																																	
HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	HOLE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	TOT	HOLE	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	TOT		
Tee shot	110	80	70	80	80					Tee shot																							
2nd shot	70	70	70	80						2nd shot																							
3rd shot	70			70						3rd shot																							
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PRACTICE SPECIFICS

There's a difference between practicing and warming up. To get better, you want the practice experience to replicate the playing experience as closely as possible. Pia likes to imagine grandstands on either side of her as she practices with her driver—and she doesn't want to hit any shots into the crowd. Another way to replicate playing is to hit shots in the order you'd hit them on the course. Play the first few holes of your course, shot by shot, on the range before your round.



SENSITIVE HANDS
We spend a lot of time in Sweden, where cold-weather golf is a way of life. To play in heavier gloves requires you to be much more aware of your grip pressure. You can use that thought to practice in good weather, too. Put on a pair of winter gloves and hit some pitch shots. You're more aware of how you hold the club, because it's unfamiliar and less stable with the big gloves on. Use that awareness to practice keeping consistent, light grip pressure.

OPERATING SPEED
We're all wired to go through our routine and swing at a certain speed. It's OK if that speed is fast, medium or slow, but keep the tempo the same. Players tend to speed up or slow down under pressure. Count how long it takes from the start of your pre-shot routine to when you hit the ball, and keep that number consistent for every shot.



➤ Tour players spend more time practicing putting than any other individual shot, and for good reason. Being able to make putts gets more important as your scoring potential gets better. Practicing your stroke is important to break 80, but we believe that many players don't spend enough time on "total putting"—making sure the stroke they're practicing matches who they are, and that the good stroke they're developing is making the ball roll on the correct line. You are unique as a player, and everything from your build to your eye dominance goes into how you make a stroke and read a putting line.

FEELING THE RIGHT LINE

Practicing a straight putt is a good way to groove your stroke, but most putts on the course will have some break. Create a set of gates with tees, like Pia did here, and practice hitting breaking putts through them. It will help you understand the relationship between speed and line.

Another way to get a sense for break is to do this drill in your socks. Just walking to the hole to retrieve your balls will give you a tremendous sense of even slight undulations.



GRIP SWITCH

Most tour players take off their glove to putt and use a reverse-overlap grip instead of the standard interlocking or overlapping grip they'd use for a full shot. Why? Feel. Your fingers are the most sensitive part of your body, and you want to have them in contact

with the putter grip, not covered up with a glove. The change in grip is designed to get the handle of the putter into your palm, get your hands working together and reduce any wrist movement.

PUTT TO AN IMAGINARY TARGET

Some players have a tendency to leave putts way short or long. Use an imaginary target 10 inches in front or 10 inches behind the hole to correct this problem. Bowlers pick an

intermediate target. They aim for one of the diamonds on the lane a few feet in front, not at the pins themselves. Why? Because it's easier to align with something closer.



IMPROVE YOUR PUTTING EYE

Eye dominance plays a huge part in putting well. By setting up with your dominant eye over the ball, you see the line with much less distortion, and it's easier to putt the ball on that line. To determine your dominant eye, make a triangle with your hands (like we are doing on the opening page) and look through the triangle at a distant object with both eyes open. Then, close one eye. If the object stays in the same place in your vision, you are dominant in the eye you kept open. Lynn is right-eye dominant; Pia is left-eye dominant.



A lot of professional and elite amateur players who already have fantastic technique and top-level fitness have come to see us. They clearly didn't need much help with actually hitting the ball. But what many of them lacked was a clear, focused decision-making process about what shot to hit, and the courage to stick with the decision after it was made. You can practice and refine your decision-making process in such a way that both your score and your swing get better. Making the right decisions about clubs and strategy is key, but learning how to clear your mind of worry and doubt helps you perform at a consistently high level.

LINE OF COMMITMENT

If you want to break par, when you're on the course you have to be a player, not a student of the swing. With the elite players we teach, we ask them to place a physical "line of commitment" on the ground behind the ball for every practice session. For each swing, they must decide what shot they want to hit, visualize accomplishing that shot successfully and go over any swing thoughts they might have from behind the line. Once they step over the line and get into their setup, the only thoughts are about the target. Try it during your next practice session. If a mechanical thought creeps in when you're over the ball, step away, behind the line, and start again.

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