

Separation of Functions in Golf

ClearKeyGolf®

The power in pre-shot is not in the word "Routine." The "mission" of the pre-shot "moment" is in its planning function. Use it to manage each upcoming shot. And since no two shots are apt to be the same in any given round, it cannot be considered "routine."

"Routine" only refers to the necessity to plan for each and every shot. We need routine use of planning before we move into position to execute the shot. That is, of course, if you want your mental game to work in your favor. After that moment of planning, however, most players show a thoroughly mistaken move. They tend to continue thinking whatever it is they want to do all the way through execution. Players have thought, erroneously, that "routine" activity will "calm their nerves." And it may, in the same way that not "stepping on a crack" may avoid "breaking your mother's back."

What that has done is cause players to leave no space for transition between the manual activity in pre-shot planning and the execution of the shot, thus voiding any possibility of reaching the level of automatic activity. Unfinished transition is to mental management what not finishing the back swing, or failing to maintain balance and posture through the swing, is to execution of a shot.

There are three important stages for every shot. Planning, transition, and execution. After 30 years of observing and timing player behavior, the following produces a thoroughly representative image.

Planning a shot takes as long as it takes, and needs whatever direction is involved in the upcoming shot, within the rules, of course.

Transition requires a minimum of 5-6 seconds to shift from manual to automatic. Without that shift, one cannot open the path to the automatic principle. (It's like using a clutch and shifting gears with a stick shift).

Then, if the implementation and use of clear keys to manage execution is understood, there will be a remaining 7-8 seconds to apply to execution, assuming you wish to play on automatic.

Any longer than that and no management device or function is capable of avoiding the intrusions that come from normal anxiety. That's how powerful the human system of defense is and how easily the mismanagement of one's non-conscious action storage leads to unwanted action.

The transition is vital to allow the automatic process to operate successfully, however, whether you play on automatic or continue to confine yourself to manual execution, the transition period will provide enough inactive mental time, to "shift gears," even if that shift from manual to automatic happens to be incomplete.

The recommendation, though, is to learn how to manage your game through the automatic principle. One more caution: remember that target focus is a future orientation which causes our systems to trigger anxiety. That can upset the best laid plan, so develop your habits in such a way that you dispense with any need to look again at the target after you reach setup. You will need a sound alignment habit for that. At first that may be difficult to do, but keep working on the habit with the 32-ball drill until you have

built that strongly enough to withstand any pressure.

To avoid confusion, be sure you take note that every shot in the book needs that same 14 second window, not only for the effectiveness of each shot, but also to build consistency in the game. Putting and short game action is often worrisome at first for players new to the process. For chipping and putting, perform your pre-shot planning at the ball (setup position); check your alignment, if necessary, unless you have already built an alignment habit that is reliable, which will allow you to step back into that position while you are using your clear key; take one rehearsal swing or stroke as a rule, for either a chip or a putt; then step out of setup, start your clear key and step back into position while continuing your key; do your waggles and set your club or putter while saying your key the second time and then make your shot or stroke while saying your key the third time.

(If you don't like any rehearsal stroke you made, do another, but literally tell yourself to delete the unwanted one before you do the second one. Our systems are non-discriminatory. They only know what we tell them. So delete explicitly if you need to take more than one rehearsal swing. The reason for "one only" is that we cannot possibly expect our systems to make the choice between two or more swings for us since non-discriminatory also means there is no distinguishing one from another unless we specify the one we want. Unless we tell them specifically, our systems may wind up choosing something we did not want. Works just like your PC. If you have a misspelled word on your screen, you have to correct it, delete it, or live with the result).