GOLF

HOW TO PLAY ?

Playing golf is a fun, relaxing hobby for many people, and a competitive sport for some others. When learning to play golf, you’ll want to start by learning some basic rules and the technique for swinging a club to hit the ball. It’s also helpful to know how to obtain equipment and to learn some proper golf course etiquette so you can safely have fun with anyone you play with.

Golf Instructions

1 Learn the object of the game.

• In golf, the object of the game is to get your ball from the starting point, or “tee,” to the green and into the hole. The hole is marked by a flag, and you want to get your ball in it with as few shots as possible. “Hole” is not only the physical hole, but also refers to the entire area from the tee to the green, where the physical hole is.[1] According to Golf Teacher Michael Metz, a key skill for beginners is learning to read greens. He suggests, "Imagine [...] the low side is in your palm, the high side is in your fingers. So you always read the palm side, the low side, and then [...] look up. That way you get a truer read [than] if you're reading from the top down. [Also], the lowest spot is wherever the water would pool."  
• A standard golf course has 18 holes, or areas with a tee, green, and physical hole marked by a flag. There are smaller courses as well, such as 9-hole courses, which are ideal for beginners.

2 Play the course by the order of holes.

• Every golf course is different in terms of how it is structured, and which hole you start and end with. Every hole has a “tee off” area where you start, and a physical hole where you finish. It’s a good idea to carry a course map with you on the course or to go with a group that has at least 1 person who’s familiar with the order of the course.  
• Find a course map at the course’s main office, where you check in and can rent gear.

3 Take your turn in your group. To avoid confusion and having everyone hit the ball at once, you should know when your turn is. Usually the person with the best score from the previous hole tees off first, with the next best score going next, and the worst, or highest score, going last.[2]  
After the tee off at each hole, the person who is farthest away from the hole hits first, then the person who is next farthest away, and so on until everyone gets the ball to the hole.

4 Don’t move your ball on the course. If your ball lands in an unexpected place, which it will when you’re a beginner, it’s against the rules to pick it up and move it. You have to play it where it is, unless it’s blocked by a man-made obstruction, like a yardage marker or a beer can.[3]  
If you’re not sure that something near your ball qualifies as an obstruction, ask a more experienced player.  
If you hit your ball out of bounds or into water, you will have to take a 1 stroke penalty, drop your ball again where you shot it, and try again.

5 Keep score for each hole. Each hole on a golf course has an ideal number of strokes it should take to get the ball into the physical hole, which is known as the “Par.” Each time you hit the ball counts as a “1” toward your score. Pars range from 3-5, and each hole on a course will be called a “Par 3,” “Par 4,” or “Par 5.”  
Your score on each hole has a nickname relating to the par for that hole. For instance, shooting 2 under par, or getting the ball in the hole in 3 shots on a 5-par hole, is called an “Eagle.” Shooting 1 under par is a “Birdie,” and shooting even with the par is just called “Par.”  
Shooting 1 over par is a “Bogey.” Then 2 over par is a “Double Bogey,” 3 over par is a “Triple Bogey,” and so on.

6 Win by having the lowest score at the end. When your group reaches the last hole, the person with the lowest overall score is the winner. You can keep track of how you’re doing throughout the game by comparing your score to the pars for each hole. If you’re consistently shooting on par or below par, you’re doing really well.  
In the beginning, you will probably shoot over par, especially on more difficult, 5 par holes. This is totally normal. You will improve with the more practice you have.

7 Try a Par 3 course when you’re starting out. A Par 3 course means that all the holes on the course are Par 3, so the distances between the tee and the hole are shorter than a standard course, which has a mixture of Par 3, 4, and 5 holes. These courses are ideal for beginners.[4]  
The total par for the course is the number of pars added up from all the holes. This number is typically 72 on a standard golf course, less on a smaller course. A 9 hole, Par 3 course would be a total 27 par course.