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# HINTS ON PLAYING

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## APPROACHING THE BALL

By ROBERT H. (SKEE) RIEGEL

USGA AMATEUR CHAMPION 1947  
MEMBER OF USGA WALKER CUP TEAM 1947

Volumes have been written on how to swing a club but very little about the best method of approaching the ball preparatory to striking it.

Your manner of walking to your ball should be casual. Whether your drive was good or bad, your pace should be the same, your mind relaxed. Don't sap your energy by worrying about your shots.

When you reach your ball, study your lie. Judge the distance to the green, taking contour and wind into consideration. Decide whether your shot should be a fade or draw, high or low. If there is a crosswind, select a point to left or right of the pin at which to aim.

After you reach these decisions, select your club.

The rhythm and pace of your swing are interdependent with your speed of walking and, more important, with the few steps you take, club in hand, preparatory to taking your stance. Those steps and the "waggle" are an integral part of the swing—they affect the pace of the swing.

The immediate approach to the ball begins by taking an approximate grip on the club. Place the right foot first if you are right-handed. Before bringing the left foot into position, sole your club, making sure it is lined properly, and look up at your objective. Then bring the left foot into position.

As your left foot touches the ground, glance at the ball, waggle the club, look up at your objective and back at the ball, meanwhile adjusting your feet and grip to get the right feel. Then start your swing.

The waggle—long, short; low, high; inside, outside—has a bearing on how you take the club back.

Establish a definite pattern of thought and mechanics preparatory to hitting the ball, just as you try to groove your swing.

## PATIENCE AND PRACTICE

By MRS. JULIUS A. PAGE, JR.

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I learned golf in a manner quite different from that of most of my golfing friends. I never had a lesson from a professional—not that I do not have faith in our pros, but after I had started alone and developed beyond the beginner stage, Dad took me to several pros, and they advised that I was a "natural swinger."

However one may learn to swing, there are two words which describe the development of every champion: PATIENCE and PRACTICE.

You must have patience with yourself, first. Do not expect perfection in a day. If a pro is teaching you, be patient with him. He cannot teach you in one lesson. And do not force yourself until you are physically exhausted.

The saying "practice makes perfect" has real meaning for a golfer. But the practice must be intelligent. Five minutes of thoughtful practice is worth hours of plain ball-hitting. Take a correct stance, use a firm grip, especially with your left hand, visualize the flight of the ball in relation to your stance so you know you are aiming at your objective and, above all, *swing*. Do not stop. Carry through and finish each practice shot.

Another important quality is relaxation. This can be acquired. In addressing the ball, the feet should be flat, knees slightly flexed to release tension through the legs, and the waist bent to relax the abdominal muscles. The arms hang. The muscles of the fingers and hands grasping the club are the only muscles under contraction.

The backswing moves into action the muscles of the right side by shifting the weight to the right leg. The left side remains relaxed. On the downswing, this order is reversed. Thus the swing can be explained in terms of relaxation.