

# Golf meets Mind

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# Mental Keys

Before the Game • The Game • The In-Between Time • After the Game

Dorothee Haering  

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Move your Game

Dorothee Haering  
and Justin Walsh PGA- & Mental Coach

# **Golf meets Mind**

## **Mental Keys to Peak Performance**

Move your Game 



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# **|| Foreword: Dorothee Haering**

## **Yes, I Can Do It!**

Ever since I started my (second) golf career at the age of forty-five I was convinced: In five years' time I would have a single handicap entered in my club ID.

Golf has accompanied me from my cradle, and most of my family has the bug too. My grandfather practiced enthusiastically on a chipping green in his garden, and my father, a successful team player, regularly took me with him on the golf course when I was a child. At the weekends I was a proud caddy and accompanied "my players" throughout the tournaments and also briefly took part in junior training. Later, life had other plans for me, and there followed an involuntary golf-intermission lasting thirty-eight years until the golf addiction broke out again with a vengeance.

I will do (almost) anything to improve my game - in this I am no different from about ninety percent of all golfers. Where my luck lies, however, is with my pros. They fan the flames of my sporting ambition with first-class training programs; encourage my preference for holistic learning through mental training. And to top all this I have discovered an ancient discipline which is a goldmine for us golfers - yoga.

You can take it as a given, I too am seeking the "perfect swing", to finally weed out all mistakes in order to optimize



backswing, downswing, release, the chip, the putt. This means reading books on golf, practicing my setup position when I'm brushing my teeth, and installing a putting green in my living room. But you can practice till the cows come home - setbacks and low points are an inseparable part of the golf experience. What was it Tom Watson said? "My golf swing is like ironing a shirt. You get one side smoothed out, turn it over and there is a big wrinkle on the other side".

Does this happen to you too? Suddenly a tournament turns into a nightmare, annoyance with the scores increasingly sours your mood, three-putts become the order of the day and by hole 16 at the very latest you would just like to give up and go home. If this scenario sounds all too familiar, then "Golf meets Mind" is the book you've been looking for!

There is information here that I would have loved to have had at the beginning of my golf career. It would have made my five-year plan to a single handicap even more efficient and would have helped me avoid so many beginner's mistakes. Don't worry, it's easy! You will find helpful hints for effective practicing on the driving range, selected drills for bettering your concentration, methods such as "thought-stop" and the "acceptance line" as well as suggestions for optimum nutrition. You will find all this and more as well as instructions on breathing and relaxation techniques - and you can move at your own pace!

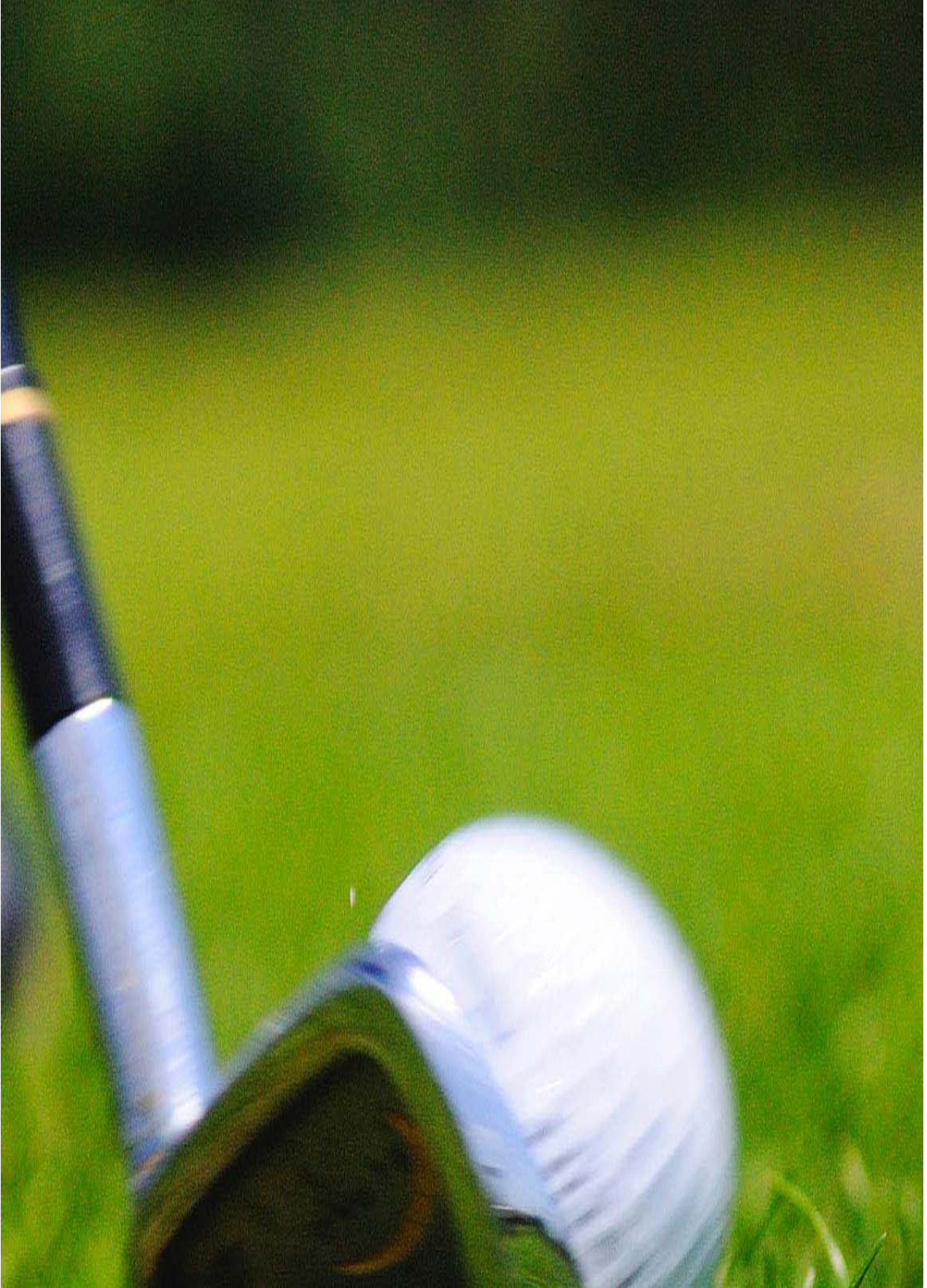
"Golf meets Mind" will support you in becoming calmer, feeling more comfortable about yourself as a golfer and

playing your own game. Maybe soon – just like me – you will be humming a little tune when you’re lining up your putt?

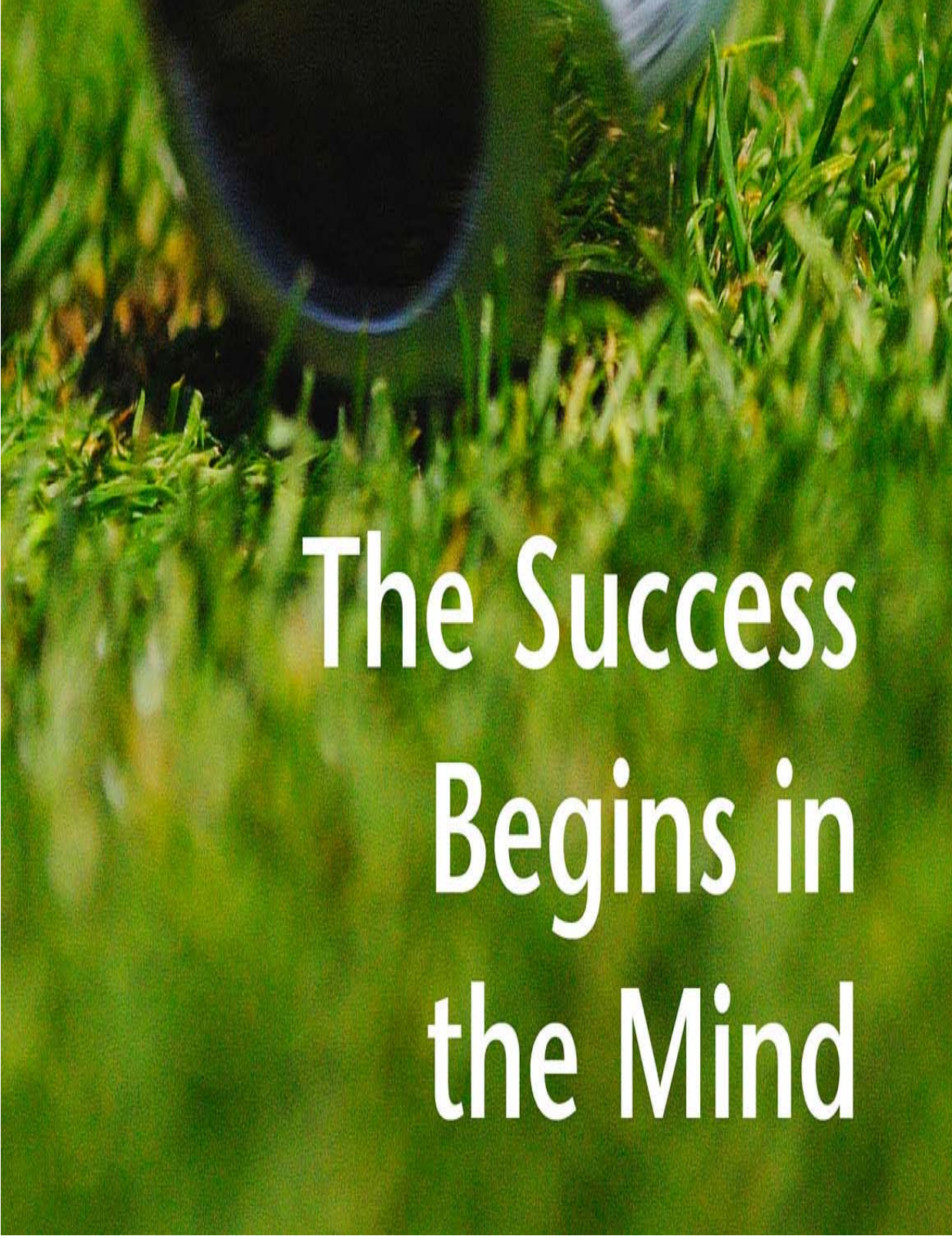
I hope you enjoy the short anecdotes which describe my stumbling, sometimes comic, steps on the way to my single handicap. “Golf meets Mind” was conceived and written for golfer of all levels of performance and is to be seen as a practical guide. I wish you much pleasure in optimizing your golf – move your game!

Cordially yours, Dorothee Haering









**The Success  
Begins in  
the Mind**

# || Introduction: Justin Walsh

## Mastering the Mental Game

Over the last thirty years a real golf revolution has taken place in America and Europe. Technique, balls, equipment, training methods, video swing analysis - everything is new! And what are the effects of this boom? Not all we hoped for, as the average handicap has not improved. The golf revolution is like the squaring of the circle: Research has proven that there is no technically perfect golf swing. However, amateur golfers spend most of their time trying to achieve one! After twenty years of experience working with a wide spectrum of golfers we know that every golfer in the world can be classified as one of these four golfing types:

Golfer 4 technically untrained	+	mentally untrained
Golfer 3 technically untrained	+	mentally trained
Golfer 2 technically trained	+	mentally untrained
Golfer 1 technically trained	+	mentally trained

Who do you think will win if type 2 and type 3 - both with the same handicap - play against each other over ten tournament rounds? I am sure that type 3 will leave the course as the winner; technically not very good but mentally well-prepared. This is because even the best technical training is no protection against bad shots. Wayward shots are part and parcel of the game of golf - and while I am writing this, the world's best golfer, Tiger Woods, is out

there hitting only 58 percent of fairways. The difference between amateurs and tours pros is less in the swing than in the ability to not let themselves be affected by “unwanted experiences”. What does Bobby Jones say? “Competitive golf is played mainly on a five-and-a-half-inch course the space between your ears”.

Consider the following points to see how decisive the “game in your head” can be. How is a round of golf structured? A swing lasts all of two seconds. Therefore, in a round lasting four hours, three to six minutes of that is devoted to swinging the golf club. What is going on in the remaining 234 to 237 minutes? Is the golfer merely enjoying nature? Is he or she worrying the whole time about their technique? Or is the golfer wondering why, if they are “the best training champ on the range” how come their performance on the course is not up to scratch? “Golf is a good walk spoiled” says Mark Twain. Using mental training – using your mind, not the club – you will never spoil your walk again.

Mental training is more than crisis management; it is an essential ingredient for better scores! And this is why tour players practice mental techniques on a daily basis. As well as bettering their swing, they acquire goal-oriented behavior and mindset. They use mental training strategies and mental game analysis programs; they practice relaxation techniques, the visualization of movement sequences and school themselves in mindfulness – the entry ticket for a state of flow.

In this book you will find food for thought and exercises tested in the field for golfers of all levels. A mental mixture of cognitive psychology, sport psychology, relaxation techniques, neurolinguistic programming (NLP) and perceptual psychology. Very soon you will be able to alter the cause-effect mechanism in all four of the important performance quadrants. As surprising as this may sound, almost every process, almost every action, can be divided into these four quadrants:

**Before the Game • The Game • The In-between Time  
• After the Game**

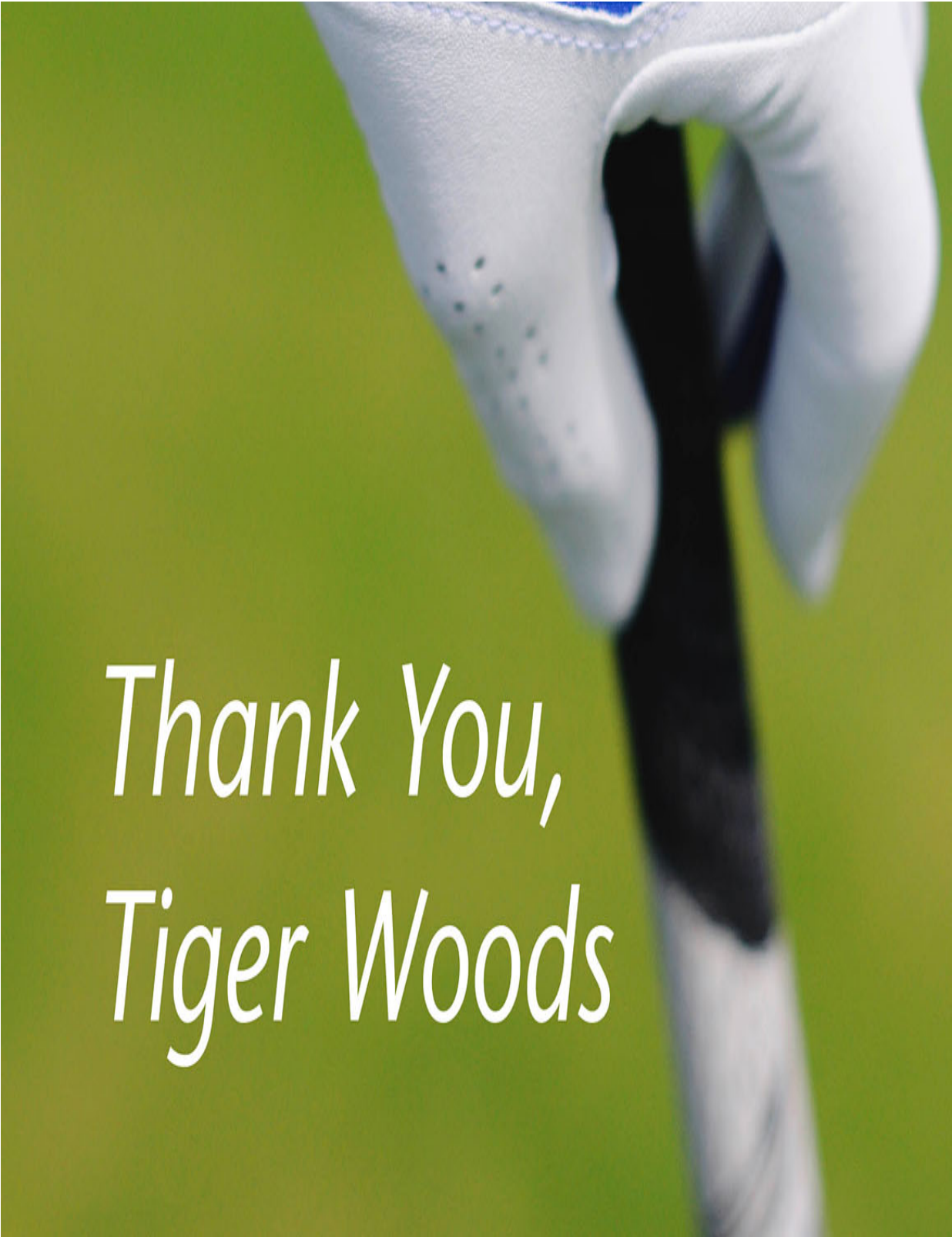
"Golf meets Mind" will help you to train your mind and to increasingly improve your game, even when under pressure.

Justin Walsh









*Thank You,  
Tiger Woods*

## **Thank You, Tiger Woods**

*How often does a mere mortal golfer have the opportunity to stand next to Tiger Woods and hit golf balls? I have had that honor several times. I could hardly breathe I was so excited, and my shots were played with more luck than skill. And when a shot was particularly poor, I wished the ground would open up and swallow me.*

*In the meantime I have become slightly accustomed to our dual performances. Apart from our different statures I have noticed a certain similarity between our setup positions. I was able to adjust my backswing by two inches to that of Tiger Woods after only one week of practice. Only 17 inches to go, so theoretically nine more weeks training in winter camp should do it, don't you think?*

*Due to his incredible mental power, Tiger Woods is not bothered by my amateurish golf game. I wonder if he has noticed that my swing has changed over the last few years? I would like to know, but one doesn't speak to a pro unless spoken to first. I learned that as a caddy a long time ago. So I can only offer my heartfelt thanks to Tiger Woods that he is always at my side each year in winter training camp - via video analysis!*











# The Mental Set of Clubs



## **|| Before the Game**

### **Mind meets Golfer**

- **Setting Goals, Achieving Goals: The Sat-Nav for Success**
- **The Game of Thought: The Spirits You Evoke**
- **Expectations: The Score Killer**
- **The Anchoring Technique: Emotional States at the Push of a Button**
- **Practice Makes Perfect**
- **Visualizing: Playing Golf in Your Head**

## Before the Game: Mind meets Golfer

What do you bring with you to the first tee? No, I don't mean what's in your golf bag or your snack box. Instead I am asking about your "mental set of clubs", the expectations, goals, motivation, constitution, beliefs and self-confidence that influence your game before you have even set foot on the golf course. How many of these "mental clubs" support you, and how many are only so much ballast, obstacles, or drains on energy differs from bag to bag. The first step: Inspection and decluttering so that order rules in your bag! An in-depth, actual-state analysis helps achieve this. You will be amazed what has accumulated in your "mental set of clubs" over the years. There are certainly some "clubs" you should preferably get rid of. On the other hand, some important "mental clubs" might be missing. Techniques which will support you with the necessary calmness in difficult situations or which will help you to give of your best when under pressure. And there are certainly some clubs that need adjusting or exchanging. Maybe your training habits on the driving range, or your visual performance when putting?

In the following chapter you will receive instructions and hints on how to compile your "mental set of clubs" before the game and to practice with them in order to be best equipped for the challenges on the course.





## Practicing Mental Strength

You will have noticed by now, the motto is: Ask questions, collect and analyze information, make decisions and act accordingly. However, a new equipment or one coaching session with a pro is not going to cure swing errors or finally crack the magical 200-yard mark. You will only achieve this by practicing, practicing and again practicing and by constant analysis and correction. The same goes for mental training: Just reading the chapters and trying something out is not going to motivate your mind to change old behavioral patterns and to react in a new way. Practice is necessary here too. However, the good news is that many mental exercises are easily integrated into daily life without any extra effort. Whether you are stuck in a traffic jam or waiting for someone, use the time and exercise your mind each day for a few minutes. Subsequently, out on the course, you can then gradually begin to use the respective “mental clubs”. And Rome wasn’t built in a day! Concentrate on only one



subject at a time otherwise your bag will soon become cluttered again.



## **The Golf Log Book**

The most important “mental club” in your bag is a small notebook or ring binder – your personal log book. On the high seas this is still – despite the Internet – in use in order to record daily events. Document your golf journey with as much detail as you can. You can enter all golf-relevant information here: formulation of goals, training plan, your trainer’s instructions, tournament results, events and occurrences on the round and so on. Use the various scorecards, whether for the actual-state-analysis of your present level of performance; mental analysis of the round; or to discover the score boosters in your game. You can find the scorecards under: [⇒ www.move-your-game.com/download](http://www.move-your-game.com/download)

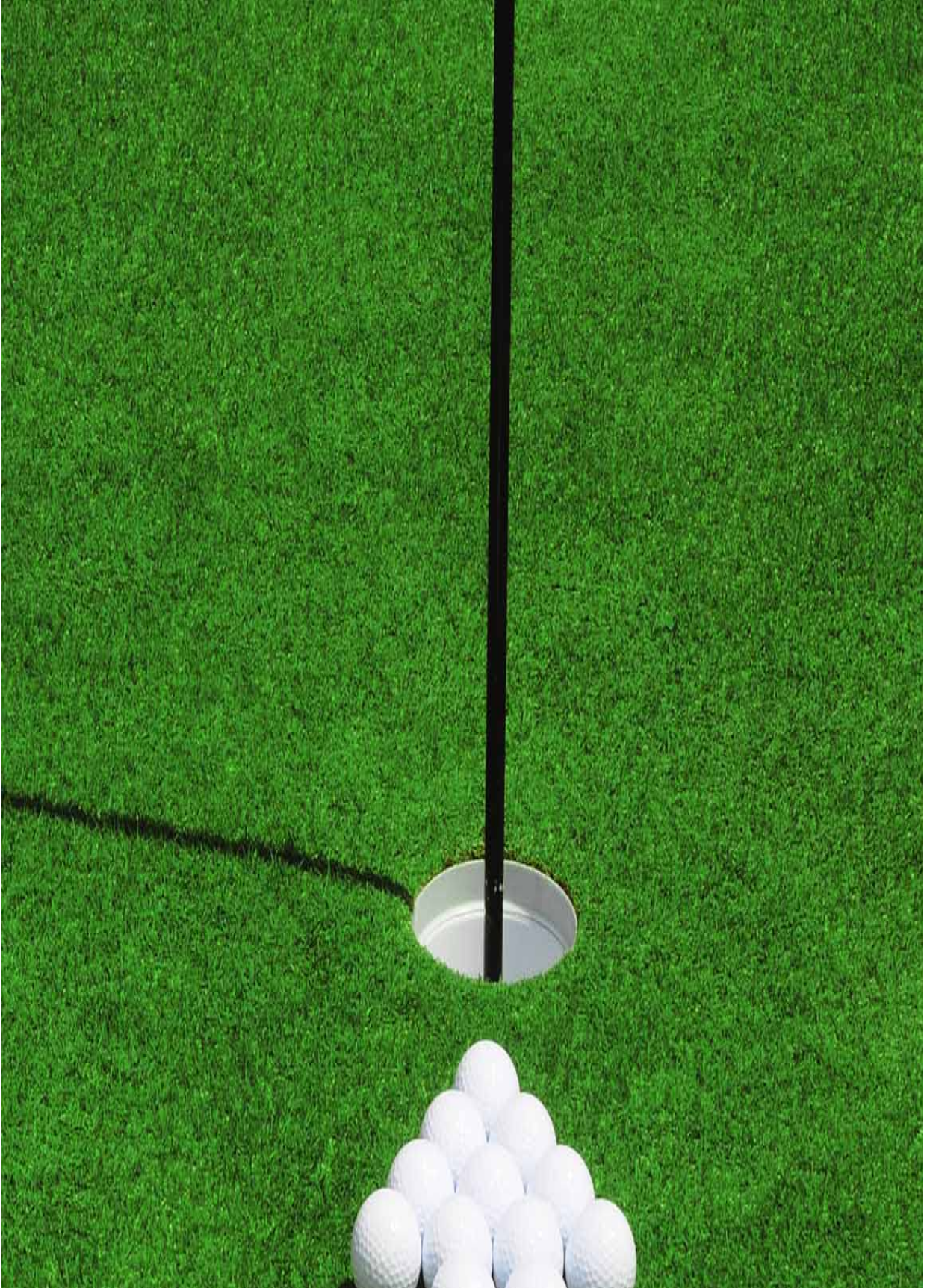


You will see, from round to round, the image you have of your game will become increasingly precise and more detailed. You will discover weak points and notice positive developments. It will be easier for you to recognize structures and regularities when mental problems arise. The view of your game will become more holistic and incorruptible. And best of all - you will not be as easily discouraged when you have played a bad round.

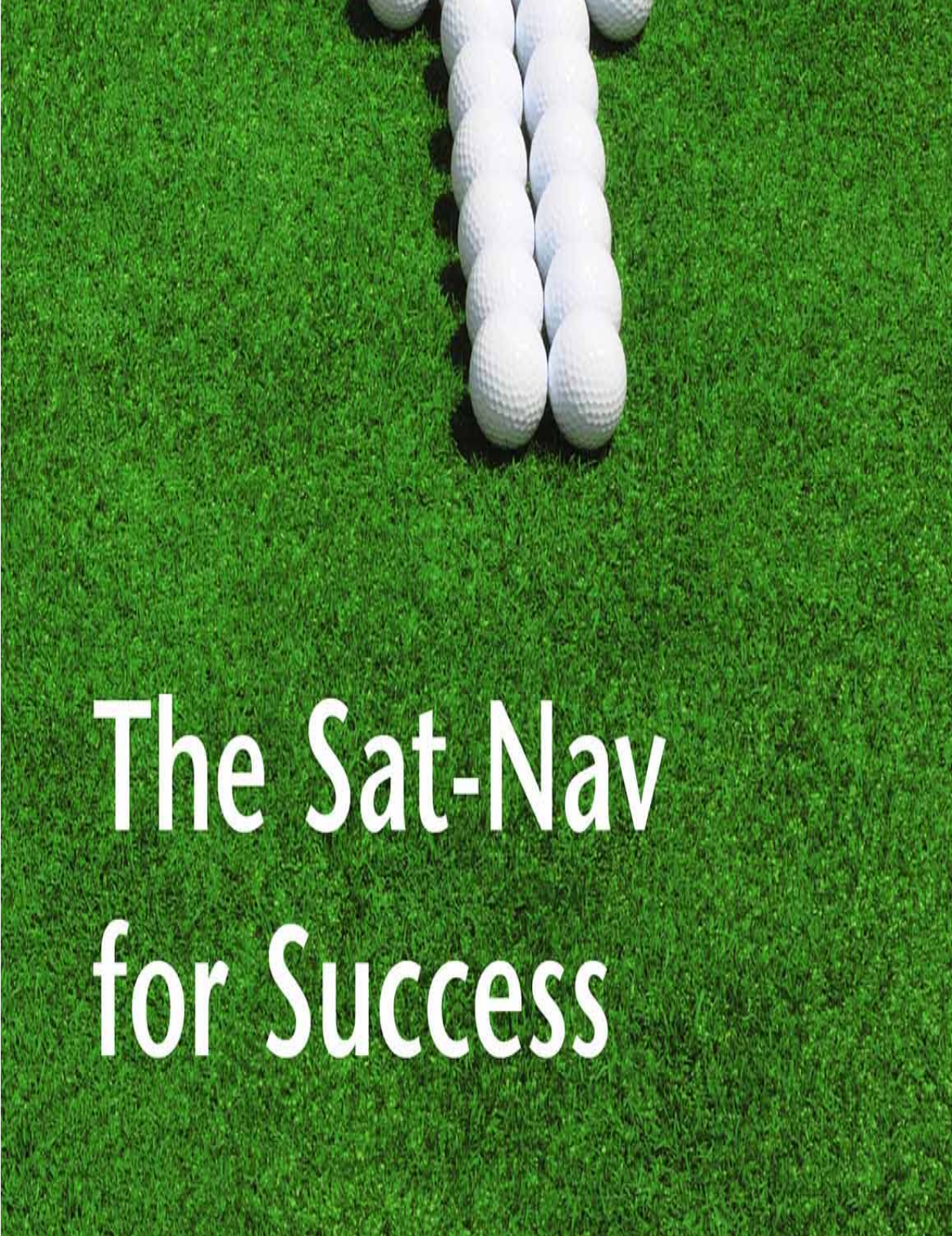
Write your own golf log book. Christopher Columbus's log book earned historical fame - yours will attain a similar value for your own game.











# The Sat-Nav for Success



## Setting Goals, Achieving Goals: The Sat-Nav for Success

A new golf season, new resolutions and new goals for your golf game. At the forefront is – of course! – to improve your handicap. The only snag: This is formulated in too general a way and more a declaration of intent than the setting of a goal. Raise your chances of achieving this year's goal by investing a little time in establishing clear, precise and measurable goals – your own personal sat-nav for success which will map out your route to a better handicap. Pay attention to all three areas relevant to golf: Body, mind and technique. Define your short-term goals, including a timeframe, and draw up your own personal training plan for the next few months. Preferably before the season starts! That way you will stay on course, know what you would like or need to work on, will rejoice in partial successes and will be motivated time after time. The best medicine for downers!

It is not actually wrong, after a tournament or after a round of golf, to practice the swing that didn't really work, but one week it will be the putter, the next the long game, then the short game, not to mention that long-term issue – the slice. It can drive you mad! As Jack Niklaus says, "The only thing constant about golf is its inconstancy!" And when he's right, then he's right. But with clearly defined goals you will not get lost, even if you find yourself in difficult terrain.



## Actual State Analysis: Body - Mind - Technique

Golf has so many facets that it is not easy to recognize one's training needs straight off. With the help of the mental check and the "actual state analysis" scorecard, it will be easy for you to gain a comprehensive overview of your physical and mental fitness, as well as of the strengths and weaknesses of your technique. Who knows? Maybe you will break 90 on your next round by working on your breathing and relaxation techniques.

## Mental Check: Warm-Up

Take a little time and, using the following checklist, analyze your mental skills "before the game", during "the game", in the "in-between time", the time between individual shots, and "after the game". There might be questions that you have never asked yourself and other items might remind you all too vividly of experiences from your last rounds. So give it a go and see what you discover when you "meet your mind"! You can find the mental check under: [www.move-your-game.com/download](http://www.move-your-game.com/download)

### Before the Game

- I play golf because I take pleasure in it and I love the challenge.
- I define my goals very specifically and concisely.
- I walk onto the course / enter the tournament without great expectations.