

Rule Your Golf Practice

5 step guide

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About this guide

Do you struggle taking your range game onto the course? Or feel like you perform better on the range rather than on the course? Or simply just unsure how to practice? Well then this guide is for you!

This guide is designed to enhance your practice. I'll be taking you through my favourite games and drills to ensure your practice is completely worth it and real to your course performance. Here are my five steps to practice.

I hope you enjoy...

Practice with purpose

Every time you hit the practice ground it should have purpose. It's important to know your goal for each session. For example could it be?

1. To work on a new swing technique? Which will include various drills.
2. To work on a particular club?
3. To practice 100 yards and in?
4. To improve your short game?
5. Work on those 3ft putts?

Whatever it may be it's good to have a goal before your practice session starts. This helps to keep your practice even throughout your game making sure each part of your game gets a look in. In the last section I go through some of my favourite goal setting techniques. Lets begin.



1. Rule Your Routine

When you play on the golf course it's likely (and recommended) you'll have a set routine for how you address your shot. This can increase confidence and help you under pressure. Everyone will have some sort of routine whether you're aware of it or maybe not. If you're unsure about your routine have a little think through these next stages.

With your routine think about:

1. How you decide what club to use?

The yardage will heavily influence this, but also think about where the trouble is and what the weather conditions are.

2. Do you have a practice swing? Some golfers do and some don't. This is completely personal for what's best for you.

3. How you align the ball to target.

Do you walk into your shot from down the line or from side on?

4. How do you react to your shot afterwards? It's good to take a moment after each shot to reflect on what happened.

Routine on the range

Walking up and down the practice ground you can't help but notice it's more like rapid fire rather than seeing golf routines perform.

This is the first step to making your range game more like your golf course performance.

For each new practice ball you hit replicate your routine every time. Think about your target, the distance you'd like to hit, what the weather conditions are, your practice swing, alignment and then a little bit of reflection time as you watch the ball fly into the distance.

This is a great way for effective practice!



Katies Tip - Leave your basket of balls a couple of yards away from you, for example leave them at the back of the bay behind you. This will encourage you to walk to get the ball and then reset each time.

It's really hard for your swing to actually change from practice to playing on the course. But there are three things that could change that can impact your strike and shot direction. Those three are:

- Rhythm
- Tension
- Alignment

Rhythm, tension and alignment can easily change on the course and often we aren't aware of it. Therefore it's important to incorporate this into practice.

Rhythm

Find a rhythm that you feel comfortable with and think what word would accompany it. For example, one that I heard recently was 'Strawberry Elephant' or 'London city'. You might prefer to use numbers 1...2 to hit the backswing and 3 for the way down. This is something that you'll start to rely on when you play on the course and it's great practice on the range.

Another game to enhance your rhythm is to practice 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% effort swings. (This is good for warming up too). When doing this take note of your distances - these may come in handy!

When you are swinging at 25% and 50% you're likely to feel movements clearer, for example you'll probably get a sense where the club head is throughout the swing. This is great for staying in control of your swing.

Tension

Tension is something that could easily change between practice and on course performance. Do you ever feel your grip pressure tightening? Or maybe your shoulders start to get a little higher? Tension can easily change between performance and practice, this is something that should be considered on the range.

Drill:

Think of a scale between 1 and 10.

1 you're holding the grip very loose and 10 you're holding it super tight. Find a pressure where you feel most comfortable. For me personally a 4 feels good. Another way of thinking about it is someone could just come and swipe the club out of your hands at set up, this should be easy for them to do. Take note what pressure feels good here and take that same pressure onto the course.

Alignment

When we practice on the range it's easy just to line up with the mat or with our surroundings, meaning you don't have to aim. This is totally opposite when we are on the course. When playing a round of golf we rely heavily on our aim for every single shot. To help with this we need to select different targets.

Select different targets

When on the driving range pick various targets for each shot, this means you then have to go through your routine and have a definite target. To help you could place down alignment sticks to double check where you are aiming. Being confident with lining up could save you quite a few shots on the course.



Katie's tip: The club face should be facing to the target with your feet running in a parallel line. If your feet point at the target then the golf ball to target line could be slightly off.

2. Rule Your Long Game Practice

If you're not practicing on your technique, certain drills or haven't got a range of distance to work on, then perhaps practice with purpose with a game. Here are some of my favourite games to play on the range.

Three golf shots with one club

Each golf ball has to be to a different target or have a different shot shape. For example:

Golf ball 1 - low punch at the target on the right.

Golf ball 2 - 75% rhythm.

Golf ball 3 - stock swing at a specific target.

Play 9 holes on the practice ground

This one is great for practicing your visualisation skills and can pass on a sense that you are actually playing the course.

Simply visualise the golf hole on your practice ground. Visualise where the fairway is and where the trouble is. Play your shot as if you were on that hole. The next shot, play it as if it were real to that hole. For example if you feel you may have hit the trees on the right then perhaps take your 7 iron and punch out. If you've hit your best down the middle what club would you take next?

This game is great for adding real scenarios into your practice.

Fairway finder

Visualise a very narrow fairway on the range (lets' say 25 yards). With 10 golf balls how many would hit your fairway? Record your score and try and beat it each time you hit the practice ground. Try this with a variety of clubs. When you reflect on your scores is there a club that hits the target more than others? Is there a club that doesn't hit the fairway as much as you like? This could be a good indicator on what to practice.

Scoring shots

This game includes all your scoring shots. Pick three distances, for example 50 yards, 70 yards and 100 yards.

With your best and honest guess see how many you can get landing within 10ft of your target. Start with 20 balls and every shot that lands within your scoring zone you get 1 point. Getting your wedges tight from these distances will give you the best chance for getting up and down. Remember from 8ft approximately 50% of putts are holed.

Katie's 21 range challenge

If you start with a basket of 50 golf balls, see how far you get and how many golf balls you have left once you've completed all the levels. 21 is a perfect score to have used, leaving 29 golf balls remaining.

You have to complete the level you are on before moving onto the next.

For each level visualise a fairway/green and a target.

Level 1 - Chip two golf balls in a row from 10 yards that land within 6ft of your target.

Level 2 - Pitch two golf balls in a row from 50 yards that land on your (visualised) green.

Level 3 - Hit two shots in a row that land on the green from 100 yards.

Level 4 - Hit two shots with a mid iron that land on your green.

Level 5 - Hit two shots with a long iron/hybrid that land on your green.

Level 6 - Hit two fairway wood shots that land on your narrow fairway.

Level 7 - Hit two drives that land on your narrow fairway.

Level 8 - Hit one drive, followed by one long iron, followed by a wedge that all land on your fairway and then green.

Level 9 - Hit two scramble shots. For example, one low punch, one very high shot or one curve shot.

Level 10 - Hit one Drive down a narrow fairway, followed by one 50 yard pitch which lands on your target.



Katies tip - when playing any of these games on the range it's best to record your results so you know how your performance is going and challenge it for next time.

Note - Levels 1 to 3 will be consecutive shots.

Levels 4 to 10 do not have to be consecutive shots. However if you would like to make it more of a challenge then complete all levels with consecutive shots.

3. Rule Your Short Game Practice

If you're not working on technique and need to keep your practice engaging, then these are my favourite games to play.

Par 18

Around a chipping/pitching area place 9 balls in random locations including slopes, rough, fairway, divot (make it interesting). Quite simply try and get up and down from each location. (If you're not able to putt on your chipping area then count anything within 6ft as an up and down, or within 3ft if you're looking for added pressure.) The par for each golf ball is a par 2. Record your scores and rate how hard you make the game. Keep track of your record and watch your short game improve.

Ladders

This could be the best game for your chipping! Place 5 irons/alignment sticks in a row down on your chipping area to create 4 different boxes. To start leave about 1 yard between each box. To set up have your practice bag around 5 yards before box 1. The drill is to land the golf ball in your box, (note - it doesn't have to stay in your box.) Work up and down the ladder and use different clubs. Notice which club you find easier and harder with.

Katie's ladder challenge

Start with 10 golf balls and place yourself 5 yards away from box 1.

The challenge is you have to hit your box before moving to the next box.

For example, chip into box 1. Hit. Chip to box 2. Miss. Chip to box 2. Hit. Chip to box 3. And so on. With 10 golf balls can you work up and down the ladder before running out? If not how far did you get?

Katies Short game Challenge

Start with 25 golf balls and see how far you get. The perfect score is 12.

You have to complete the level you are on before moving onto the next.

For each level you'll have a set target. All yardages are from your target,

Level 1 - From 10 yards hit two golf balls that land within 6ft of your target.

Level 2 - From 10 yards play two high chip shots that land within 6ft of your target.

Level 3 - Within 10 yards of your target find a difficult lie (could be sloping) and get within 6ft.

Level 4 - From 30 yards hit two shots within 6ft of your target.

Level 5 - From 50 yards play two shots that land within 6ft.

Level 6 - From a bunker hit two shots within 6ft.

Level 7 - Play a plugged lie from the bunker and hit the green.

Note - These do not have to be consecutive hits (unless you want added pressure!)

4. Rule Your Putting Practice

Feeling conformable with your putter could be your biggest shot saver. If you're feeling stuck for what to practice then here are some of my favourite drills.

Gates level 1

Simple yet so effective. This is a great drill to ensure we strike the ball out of the centre of our club face.

- Pick a target on the putting green.
- Take your set up to your target.
- Place two tee pegs either side of your putter.
- Simply putt without hitting the tee pegs.
- This will ensure a centred strike.

Gates level 2

Once your feel comfortable with level 1 try this.

- Place a golf ball about 2ft in front of you on the line you'd like to go over.
- Place two tee pegs either side of the golf ball
- Practice putting through the first and second set of gates, this will ensure you are starting the golf ball on your intended line.



Katies tip - for both gate levels ensure you understand the read of the putt you are on so you can truly maximise your practice.

Pace control

This drill is one of my favourite drills for getting a consistent feel over your speed control. Practicing pace gives us the best chance for reducing those 3 or 4 putts.

20/30/40

- Pace out 3 tee pegs from 20ft, 30ft and 40ft.
- Place a tee from your starting position to use as a reference.
- Simply roll one golf ball to 20ft, one golf ball to 30ft and one golf ball to 40ft. Repeat this until you start to feel control over the different distances.

Katies tip - 20/30/40 is a great drill to do when you are at an unfamiliar golf club and are unsure of the pace.

Rhythm

Especially under pressure it's easy for our stroke to suddenly speed up or slow down. Maintaining a consistent rhythm will help you to hole more putts.

Metronome

Through my own experience of putting practice for me the rhythm that I feel most comfortable with is 75 bpm. I quite often have a metronome ticking to this beat as I putt. I would experiment between 70bpm and 80bpm to see what feels most comfortable for you.

We can't take a metronome onto the course with us and sometimes we could lose the beat. Again similar to the long game I like to replace the beat with a word. I have found that saying "one hundred and one" or "tik tok" fits in perfectly for the beat and it is something that is repeatable for every putt.



Katies tip - Want to take tension out of your stroke straight away? Practice putting without your thumbs on the grip. This will create a lovely smooth feel.

Katie's challenge

From 3ft place 4 tee pegs around the hole.

Can you make 50 putts without missing?

Can you make 75 putts without missing?

Can you make 100?

3ft may seem easy, but when you're close to hitting your target of 100 in a row, the pressure will start to kick in, just as if you had to make that putt for a tournament.

5. Rule Your Plan

Do you have a plan for what your practice diary should look like? How much time should you devote to chipping, pitching, putting, driving, mid irons, fairway woods, bunker shots - the list can go on.

It all depends on your round analysis, where you can see you are losing shots and where you are gaining. To start some of the best stats to record would be:

- Number of fairways hit.

- Number of greens hit in handicap regulation.

- Number of up and downs.

- Number of putts.

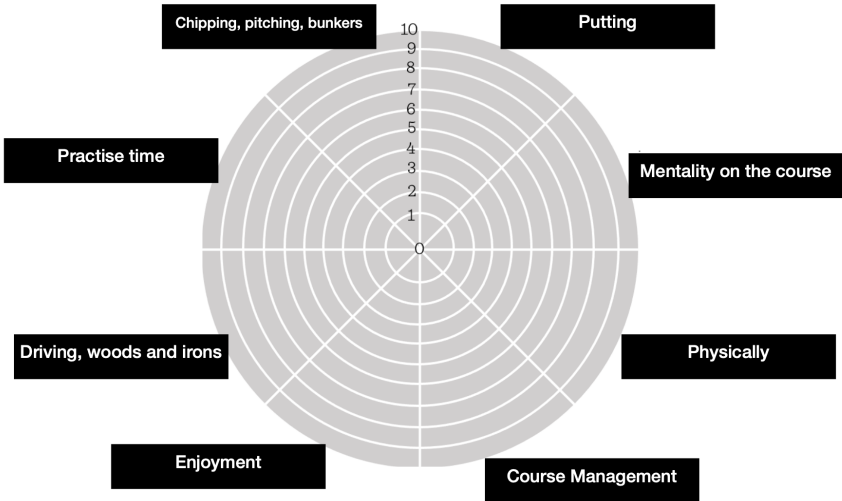
Another good way to find your strengths and weaknesses is to assess your game along this wheel. Try and be honest with yourself as this could lead to your best practice sessions. Review this wheel once a month and change your plan accordingly.

Wheel of Golf

How satisfied are you with each aspect of your game? Use this wheel to think about 8 different sections of your golf and score yourself, **10 being very satisfied** and **0 being completely unsatisfied**.

For each area draw a line to score yourself. Remember we're not looking for 10/10 on each but it will help us to find balance and consistency throughout your game.

Example



Reflections

Once completing this wheel think about:

What surprised you ?

What areas are low that you would like to increase?

How can you increase them?

What areas are high that you would like to maintain?

Usually my typical rule would be to spend a good amount of time on short game. This doesn't have to be completely on chipping and putting but also your short approach shots into the green as well. These are known as the scoring shots and can save you strokes around the green. If you are working on a new swing change throughout winter then you may decide to dedicate more time to your long game, but remember to go through your routine each time. It should take a minimum of 60 minutes to hit 50 golf balls.

Creating a training plan depends on how much time you can put aside into training. Whether it's 20 minutes or 3 hours, how you plan and practice with your time is important. For example a golfer who could put aside 5 hours a week for practice, their plan may look like this.

- Monday - 1 hour practice on the driving range with focus on rhythm, alignment and shots between 150 to 250 yards.
- Tuesday - 15 minute practice session on 2ft - 8ft putts working on rhythm and gate drill.
 - 15 minutes practicing putting pace control.
 - 30 minutes spent on chipping around the green (play par 18 see 'Rule your short game')
- Wednesday rest day or 5 hole practice
- Thursday - 30 minute session on the range working on irons from 60 yards to 120 yards. Focus on rhythm and routine.
 - Followed by 30 minutes of visualising playing the golf course on the range. (Go through shot by shot and visualise

the golf hole and fairway. *See Rule your long game practice, play 9 holes.*)

- Friday - 15 minute Bunker practice. 15 minute chipping practice (*ladder drill*). 15 minute pitching practice 30 - 50 yards. 15 minute putting practice.

Of course this is very much dependent on the facilities you have accessible, the time of year we are in and your current performance situation. Having a plan on what to work on is something that you could talk through with your coach so you can really practice with purpose and work towards your overall objectives.

Creating goals

It's fun to have an overall performance goal that we are working towards but it's important to make it achievable, measurable and specific. I like to work and celebrate the small wins. Having a set of goals are like having to do lists for the week/month. Take a look at the system I have laid out below. It's different because you start at the end and work backwards. Have a think of the small wins you'd like to achieve and see how this could impact your overall goal.

About Katie



Thank you for taking the time to read through my practice guide. I hope you find it useful.

Here's a little bit about my background. I was born just outside London in a place called Gerrards Cross. Here is where I first learnt to play, I have been swinging a golf club since the age of 3 under my Dad's guidance. My Dad, John, was a very talented PGA professional and many of my teaching methods have been passed down from him. My Mum and two brothers also play golf - things can get competitive especially when we are playing for our annual trophy.

I reached a very good level as an amateur golfer and won county, regional events and competed in national events

across the UK. I turned professional in 2012 at the age of 19 and started my PGA Degree at the University of Birmingham. I continue to compete on the Womens PGA Tour. I have had many highlights as a professional such as winning on the Womens PGA tour, competing in the Ladies European Tour Access series and making the final stage twice in the Womens British Open.

In 2016 I became the youngest post graduate to achieve the PGA's Director of Golf qualification and soon after was awarded with the PGA Advanced title.

Although golf was not my first sporting love. Prior to golf I was an international table tennis player. I represented England numerous times and won the girls schools British championship in Guernsey. Now table tennis is my party trick for when I go on holiday.

I feel so dedicated to the game of golf and I love helping golfers train and improve. I have been coaching golfers of all abilities for over 10 years. I enjoy seeing their successes and working with them to achieve their goals. In 2023 I started to coach online through the skillset app and love helping golfers perform across the world.