

What Does It Take?

To become an accomplished golfer, a golfer needs to love the game of golf. A golfer needs to learn, train/practice and play. Golf is a game of imperfections, not perfections. Golf's challenge is to make the most of imperfections (less than perfect shots). The average golfer shoots 100 for 18 holes, with par generally being 72. The average has been the same for many years. How does a golfer become better than average? Even though golfers have not improved, less than 15% seek help in improving from a qualified teacher.

As golfers make swings at the golf ball, a golfer builds habits into their neural networks. We have all heard the saying, "habits are hard to break." This is especially true with golf. What makes golf difficult is that a swing can have many different motors to move the club. You can move the club with your hands, arms, shoulders, and hips. How do golfers know which to use and in what sequence? The answer depends on how a golfer swings the club, which type of swing do they possess. People with natural athletic ability generally have an easier time learning correct motor function, but this does not mean that someone with less athletic ability cannot become an accomplished golfer. If a golfer can get a couple of things right in their swing, almost every other aspect of the swing will work in an acceptable fashion. This is due to how the body is put together, in an anatomical sense. The above statement is true for almost all players, except those with lower handicaps or golf professionals.

As I stated previously, a golfer needs to learn, train/practice and play. The learning and training are not just physical, but mental as well. The mind is a powerful ally in golf, but can also be a major detriment. Golf is unlike most sports in that there is not an offense and a defense portion of the game or contest. Golf only has an offense, the golf course provides the defense. The offense portion of golf allows golfer the choice of, do I play aggressively or conservatively. A golfer must choose, but choose wisely. During a round of golf, there is plenty of time to think between shots. How this time is used is up to the golfer. Will the golfer stay positive or allow negative forces to take root? Golf is a journey. Golf needs to be played from a micro perspective not a macro perspective. If the micro (each shot) is generally good, the macro (final score) will be as well.

So, what does it take to become an accomplished golfer? For the purpose of this writing, I would define accomplished golfer as anyone who can consistently break 80 in competition. First and foremost, the golfer needs to love golf. The golfer needs to learn (lessons), train/practice and play competitive rounds. The learning and training involve both physical and mental aspects. The earlier a golfer starts to learn, train and play in a correct manner, the greater chance they have of becoming an accomplished golfer. Adult golfers who take up the game later in life typically only play with minimal learning or training. It is difficult for them to become an accomplished golfer. Golfers who only learn but do not train or play have very little chance of becoming accomplished golfers. Golfers who train and play without learning can become accomplished golfers because they are incredibly gifted athletes and they spend hours hitting golf balls. This is true of older tour pros. They all had unique swings but spent hours and hours hitting golf balls in practice. Golfers who learn(lessons), train/practice and play can cut the time that is needed to become an accomplished golfer. Golfers who learn (lessons) need to remember what they learned when they start to practice. Practice is the equivalent of studying. I always ask this question, "when you walk into the classroom to take a test, what do you need to do?" You need to remember! We can remember in a practice swing prior to hitting a shot. We then simply step to the ball and hit the shot. Most golfers can automatically make happen what they felt 10 seconds before in the remembering phase.

Coach Imel