

# golf state of mind discover your true potential

<http://www.golfstateofmind.com>

## Mental Game Fundamentals

*“Competitive golf is played mainly on a five-and-a-half inch course, the space between your ears.”*

- Bobby Jones

## Introduction

Hello and welcome to the **Golf State of Mind** Teaching Program. I am happy that you have decided to learn the most **effective way to improve** your golf scores and what you take from the game.

Learning to become the best golfer you can be requires cultivating the right mental attitude for success. This involves developing mental toughness, characteristics of confidence, courage, patience and commitment.

The Golf State of Mind Teaching program will show you the how develop these skills. **You can learn** to master the fundamentals of the inner game.

The key question is what do **you** really want to achieve in golf? Desire will only survive with so many other things clambering for your attention if you nurture it, and stay focused. This is achieved through **clear goals** and **commitment** - an essential part of every great golfer mindset.

Success will come only when you do the **right** things, **repeatedly** and **patiently**.

You can make a decision now:-

Commit to a continuous program of improvement and honor those commitments. You are taking the first step to optimizing your mind to reach your true potential as a golfer.

### Remember

- ‡ Your mind and body are one system and affect each other directly
- ‡ You can choose 'how' to think-you can 'always' choose your **response** to what happens, definitely.
- ‡ Your body responds *as if* your 'thinking' is real, positive or negative; therefore focus on the positive outcome you want.

## Mental energy

The purpose of the **Golf State of Mind** teaching is for you to:-

**Increase self belief and confidence to enjoy more consistent golf.**

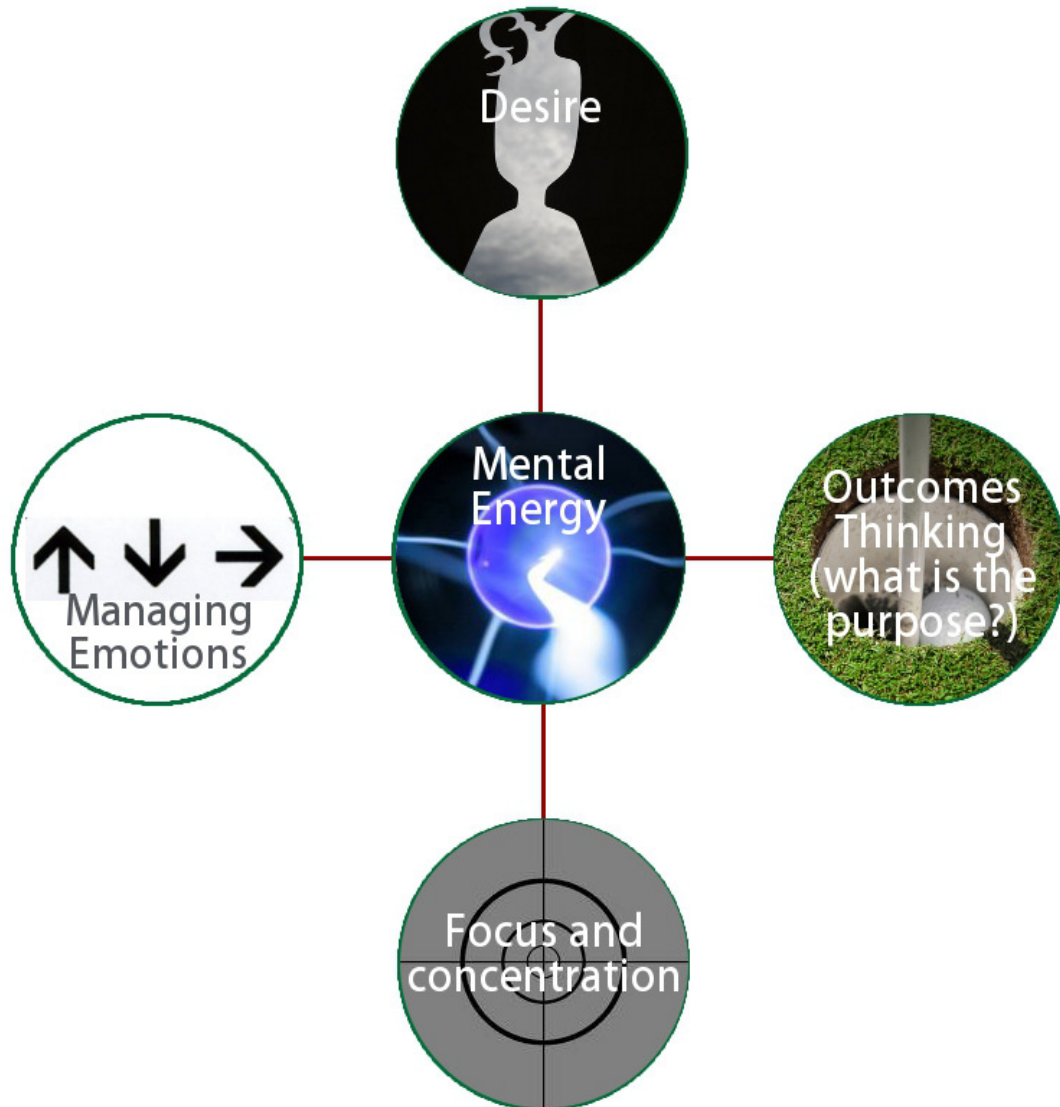
By - **Developing the mental toughness to rise to all the challenges you will face.**

So that - **You stay positive, focused, and decisive.**

To be able to - **Use your skills naturally** without the negative interferences that would normally hold you back

**Master the following fundamentals!**

## The Golf State of Mind Map



## The steps to 'effective' goal setting:-

First, list your dreams and wants (even those you may not fully believe are possible for you at this stage). For an amateur golfer, this might be to be regularly shooting in the 70s.

### Outcome goals

Only put things here you are 100% committed to achieving i.e. you are willing to take action on now.

Think about:

- ▯ What do you want expressed in the positive? E.g. "I will become a better putter."
- ▯ How will you know you've achieved it? E.g. maintaining a single figure handicap

Now write your goals to meet the following criteria:

- ▯ Specific - "I will follow my Pre-Shot Routine before EVERY shot"
- ▯ Measurable - How did I do at this?
- ▯ Achievable and challenging - set yourself a challenging yet achievable target. E.g. I would like to do this for more than 75% of my shots
- ▯ Time bound - I want to be at this target within 8 weeks

### Performance goals (process goals)

Goals required to achieve the outcome goal, e.g. Practice regimen, fitness, or commitment to specific improvements.

## II. Outcomes Thinking

*“My life has been full of terrible misfortunes, most of which never happened”*

~ Michel De Montaigne

What does this mean to you?

Where is your focus?

**“What is my target?”**

A very simple and profoundly powerful concept. Your brain doesn't process negatives or 'don't' e.g. don't think of a blue apple.

It's vital to think (often visually), sending messages to your muscles of what you do want. **The brain responds far greater to images than words.**

1. Any problem or 'don't want' can be expressed in terms of what you do want. Positive language creates positive imagery and therefore a more useful performance state.

## Reframing

You can shift your perspective at any time...

### Problem frame

### Becomes

I don't want to go  
O.O.B.

I want to be on the  
fairway

I played badly

I can play better

I don't want to be

I want to relax and play

I messed up

I will go through my

My putting is off

I'm going to concentrate  
on my pre-shot routine,  
or I will practice putting

### Outcomes Thinking

Should (ought)

Becomes Could' Choose to, Can – Will etc

Can't

-Means not willing therefore be honest!  
Or don't have the skill yet. Replace with don't

Don't

Simply state what to do, or do want

### **III. Focus**

The ability to focus or concentrate on what you choose will provide you with a supreme personal development tool that transcends golf. Daily practice even a minute or two will train your brain to focus automatically.

Concentration at one level is only “your ability to stay focused on what you choose while you choose to.” If your mind strays, the key is to ‘notice’ and bring it back without judgment. Focused attention always involves choice.

Play with breathing and relaxation techniques until you find the perfect ones for you.

#### **Levels of concentration**

1. discipline (notice and comeback)
2. interest (become fascinated with fine detail)
3. absorption (at this level you are not aware of any distractions)

#### **Some breathing techniques**

Generally, teach yourself to belly breath, rhythmic and silent, inhale and exhale with your chest still.

Visualize breathing into the bottom of the lungs.

Other techniques include:

Take a deep breath through the nose and slowly exhale through the mouth 3 times.

A deep breath and letting out the air smoothly is used universally in all sports – before or during action.

## Staying in the NOW (process thinking)

One important and useful way of being able to 'focus' is, staying in the NOW, in the present. Your attention (thinking) isn't on what's happened or what will happen (consequences), only on what's happening now, the process, e.g. your pre-shot routine.

**Inner voice:** - listen impartially, do not judge it, just gently bring your attention back to what's happening.

Direct your focus of attention to your breathing and what you see (the ball e.g.) – alert and aware but not thinking. (you can practice this any time, on any activity).

One day you'll catch yourself smiling at this inner voice.

Being in NOW is so useful in golf because you only need to perfect it for a few seconds as you go through your pre-shot routine, and it's a perfect way at any time to come out of negative emotions, regret, anger, anxiety – fear is always 'future'.

If you're truly present you don't evaluate how you're playing or keep a running total, or think 'if only'. Excitement suggests thinking about results, regret suggests past mistakes, just keep playing the shot in hand until they run out, narrow your focus on where you want the ball to go. (the target)

The best way to access 'now' is through the body and its senses (see, hear, and feel). E.g. pay attention to your breathing.

## Exercise

Ask, - “I wonder what my next thought will be”, and ‘notice’ how long it is before a thought comes in. Keep practicing until you can extend that time to several seconds or more.

This is easier, now focus on something, a glass, a golf ball etc (be very specific e.g. the light sparkling off one dimple of the golf ball). Now hold your attention and see how long it is before a thought comes in, then notice if your mind drifts and gently bring it back.

Practice, daily at first, then often to maintain the skill.

## Imagery

### Tips

- Match as near as possible the real world in your imagery
- Stand while you practice visualizing
- Consider holding a club
- Imagine in detail the course and hole you are playing
- Include other senses and emotions that would be present ideally
- Use real time generally i.e. not slow motion

If imagery isn't easy at first, practice with a mirror or video of yourself, then close your eyes and replay what you saw.

Notice the difference in the feelings seeing yourself in the picture (disassociated) and seeing the picture as if through your own eyes (associated).

## IV. Confidence

*“I never hit a shot, not even in practice without having a very sharp in focus picture of it in my head.”*

-Jack Nicklaus

## Performance State

How to access the ideal performance state for Golf (The Golf State of Mind)  
(managing your emotions) ↑ ↓ →

There are only 4 things to monitor (notice)

1. **Thinking**           What are you focused on
2. **Inner voice**       What are you saying to yourself
3. **Posture**            How are you standing/walking, holding
4. **Breathing**        In belly or high in chest/rhythmic? Etc

## About Confidence

Fully consider these beliefs about confidence held by confident people:

- ▮ *A key belief of confident people is 'whatever happens I'll handle it'*
- ▮ *Confidence means – Staying focused on what you want to happen*
- ▮ *Confidence is a decision to do what's necessary to overcome obstacles.*
- ▮ *Confident people typically don't need the approval of others in order to feel good about themselves*

*Notice the difference in your thinking and imagining when you say to yourself*

- ▮ *What if....?*
- ▮ *What would I do if...? (This one is more useful and creates a pro-active attitude)*

*Stay focused on 'wants' rather than imagining things going wrong and possible consequences, embarrassment etc.*

*Always look for the positive intention of fear and doubt,*

## Tips on confidence

- ▮ The absolute key of confidence in golf is to develop an unshakable, instinctive pre shot routine
- ▮ The brain is a mass of neural pathways; every action (including practice) creates new connections. Each time you repeat an action that particular pathway is strengthened. One of the best
- ▮ ways to accelerate our new behaviors (confidence) is through the imagination.
- ▮ (See Performance State, previous page)  
Your Body and Mind are intimately linked. It makes more sense to start using the term “mind-body.”  
Whatever you think will affect the way your body feels, and the way you use your body (posture) will affect you thoughts.
- ▮ Practice saying ‘Delete’ after poor shots especially at the range and ‘save’ after good shots  
(i.e. Shots that matched your intention)

## Nurturing your Confidence

### Checklist

Remember past successes

Realistically assess skill level

Examine Self talk

Notice physiology – posture and breathing

Preparation (sufficient rest , nutrition, warm up, rehearsal)

Focus on things under your control

Note your beliefs about yourself, in this arena,  
are they helpful or one's you want to change

How engaged are you, what is your ability  
to create a state of peak performance

## **Pre Shot Routine** – Develop your own and write it down

Here is a model that works well although it is essential you work on a personal strategy with your coach (see also recommended reading – Think box, Play box)

First stage            2+2 = 4 Decision and thinking stage

Second stage        Visualize

2+2 = 4            Always give your full attention to every shot.  
The decision phase. Consider your lie, wind etc things that will affect the shot, precise target, choice of shot, exact distance, and club selection. etc  
'DECISION MADE' 100% committed to this club and choice of shot.

Stand behind the ball, 'feel the shot' with the club (include any practice swings in this section), 'visualize' the ball flight, landing area. Choose a distant target and a short target. YES Trigger.

Step in, settle – anchor for alignment. Waggle etc  
'Trust' and focus– Instinctive and unconscious

**Remember...** Keep your sense of humor and perspective; strive to enjoy your golf!!!

Thanks for reading the Golf State of Mind Mental Game Fundamentals eBook. This forms excellent background reading before taking my free 7 week course of lessons. If you would like a more detailed, yet concise version of my eLessons, you can buy the audio book (CD or mp3) at <http://www.golfstateofmind.com/golfstateofmind.html>

