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## Getting the most out of your lesson

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Finding the best instruction for your game is not an easy task. You know this already if you have taken lessons from different golf instructors. No two are alike.

Golf teachers use distinct communication methods, teaching styles and training methods to help you learn a golf swing. Some instructors can help you improve faster because their teaching style is better suited to the way you learn. That's why you need to do your homework before taking lessons. If you already work with a teacher, then you'll want to do all you can to get the most out of your lessons and practice time.

What's the best way to go about finding a golf instructor? Like any other profession, you should research a teacher's qualifications and reputation in the local area. PGA professionals who specialize in teaching are the best place to start. Many club members feel obligated to take lessons from their local club professional. If you are serious about improving your golf game, they may not be the best choice.

Check with the local PGA section office in your area. Call your local club or range and ask for the number of the section or chapter office. Another source is *Golf Magazine's* list of the top 100 golf instructors in the country. Also, check with good players in your area.

### You and your instructor's teaching style

Instructors have different teaching philosophies. They use different teaching styles and methods, some of which are better suited to your style of learning. The best instructors mold their teaching style to the needs of the student. A good teacher knows how to teach to your learning style.

What is a learning style? It's the way that you predominately process information in your world -- visual, auditory, kinesthetic and experiential. It's important to find an instructor whose style of teaching matches your learning style, although most instructors know how to get the message across in several different ways.

One learning style is auditory or verbal. If you are a verbal learner, the instructor telling you how to swing the club may work best for you.

If you are a visual learner, you learn faster with pictures or by having the instructor demonstrate the golf swing.

If you are a kinesthetic or feel learner, you would be better matched with an instructor who uses metaphors and images of how the swing should feel. The instructor might put you in the proper position or use drills and training aids to create the proper feel.

### Keep good records of your golf instruction

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You can't remember everything you were taught in a lesson. If your teacher doesn't provide a visual, auditory or written record of each lesson, ask if you can record the lesson with an audio or video recorder. Come to the lesson with an open mind, ready to listen.

Feedback is very important. Your instructor is one source of external feedback but can't be by your side during every swing. It's up to you to determine if you are making the correct swing when you practice. For learning to occur, you need both intrinsic and extrinsic forms of feedback. Extrinsic feedback is seeing yourself on video or swinging in front of a mirror.

Training aids are important to learning because the feel of your golf swing can be deceptive. What you feel via your sensory mechanisms does not always match what you're actually doing. Videotape or the use of drills that employ training aids give you direct feedback during the swing. A training aid can accelerate learning by allowing you to see if you are practicing the swing correctly.

Training aids are most effective when they reveal whether you are doing the movement right or wrong. A training aid is less effective when it helps you get into the proper position during the golf swing and does all the work for you.

### **Set a practice schedule or plan**

Your instructor can also help you set up a practice plan and schedule. The weaker parts of your game should be a priority. Your golf teacher can help you decide how often and how long you should practice each of the areas of your game. It's important to get the most out of each lesson and practice time. (I'll cover this in a later article.)

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## **Instruction tips**

- Find an instructor that teaches in the language that you learn best (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).
- To find the best instructor, do your homework, ask questions, check references and interview potential instructors.
- Once instruction has begun, it's up to you to put your lessons to work with quality practice, feedback and repetition.
- You can't remember everything you learn in a lesson. That's why you'll want to record the lesson by videotaping it or taking notes during and after the lesson.
- Ask for drills or training aids that you can use in practice, so you know when you are performing the desired move.
- Ask your instructor to help you develop a practice schedule.

Note: This article is based on Patrick Cohn's forthcoming book *Peak Performance Golf: How Good Golfer's Become Great Ones*.

For Questions, email [pgapack@aol.com](mailto:pgapack@aol.com) or visit [www.peaksports.com](http://www.peaksports.com)

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