
GAME LIKE TRAINING

First Edition

MANUAL

“The worst mistake I made was trying to change my swing... I became so screwed up that I wasn't playing golf anymore. I was standing over the ball and thinking mechanics, what I was supposed to do. I was playing golf swing instead of golf” ‘Verdi 2012, para. 8. Craig Perks, winner of the 2002 Players Championship’

Can you ride a bike?

Did you go to bike riding school?

Did you do bike riding drills?

Did you complete technical progressions when learning how to ride a bike?

If your answer was no, then how did you learn to ride a bike? The answer is simple - you sat on a bike and learned by pedaling until you fell over. Then you got back up and tried again.

How did you learn to walk?

Sure you watched many people walk from the stroller, carrier or the crib, but you learned by doing it, along with many errors during the process. One last example which is my personal favorite. You have sat in your mums car for 16 years seeing her push the gas pedal, push the break, put the hand break on, accelerate, decelerate and steer. Does this mean you know how to drive? I believe not. You don't know how to drive until you get in the drivers seat and attempt to do so. You can also take a look at insurance bills to confirm how by doing, by driving, over time lowers the rates. The process of learning how to play golf is exactly the same.

The most effective practice conditions for learning turn out to be the conditions that most closely resemble the behaviors required in play on the golf course. Each golf shot on the course presents a different problem to solve than the previous shot. Therefore, practice that encourages the treatment of each shot as a unique problem to solve represents a style of practice that resembles real play; in our view, this method enhances these skills for play on the course. Consequently, blocked practice and other forms of repetitive activities that minimize active problem-solving activities in practice, produce the least play-specific behaviors for the golf course.

Golf is a motor skill, just like every other sport, and a motor skill is an intentional movement involving a motor or muscular component. It must be learned and voluntarily produced to proficiently perform goal-oriented tasks. In golf there is a goal, and there is a lot of problem solving in the mixture, therefore we not only need to practice effectively, we need to practice in a way that allows the skills to be transferred and retained. The only way to do this is by making practice as game like as possible. Game like is as close to the real game itself including the same if not a higher intensity. This program provides the necessary steps needed to take in order to generate the right environment for greater learning.

The documents contain a combination and culmination of tools to help create elite performance pulled from the greatest athletes in the world, the most credible human performance research analysts and pioneers of expert and elite performance. Re-creating, simulating, regulating and chunking are the four corner stones to the game like practice program. For decades we have known that practice doesn't mean perfect, but it does mean permanent. That been said we can all agree that we are what we repeatedly do and excellence can therefore be a habit, if we want it to be.

Using the 'Game like practice short game book, long game and golf course book', it is our intention to make practice the same if not even harder than the game itself. The level of difficulty these games present can be overwhelming, but we all know the bumble bee story, and we all know the famous quote, 'If it was easy everybody would do it'.

Our main tool within this program is asking this question; why? Posing that question forces our student athletes to take the road less travelled. Self discovery.

This program has been formulated on the belief of creating an athlete and not a golf swing. Its objective is to challenge students everyday during training, to provide opportunities for students to be curious with their options and seek to make a decision on their own accord. Its purpose is to help guide students to becoming interdependent and evolving into resourceful individuals. Its goal is to form through difficulty, struggle and adversity, psychologically strong human beings to live a life with no limits and a desire to stick to the process. Through game like training mastery is inevitable.

Why are elite performers elite? Why are experts, experts? What makes the best, better than the rest? Why do the greats see more than the not so greats? Within this program I uncover the secret.

Re-creating

"What you learn is what you have practiced" Matthew Cooke

The first corner stone to game-like training is re-creating the environment that an athlete may be faced with or may experience in competition. The environment can't be made exactly the same, but it can be made similar or even harder. The need for specificity in this instance is key. You can learn a golf swing but it has no impact and serves no purpose when you are stood on the 17th hole, have an in-between distance, on an awkward lie, with a little bit of dirt on the side of your ball. Having the opportunity everyday in practice to identify hundreds of different shots (process the information or input contributing to that shot), selecting a response based on what the environment will allow, and then organize the motor system to execute the action (swing), a higher level of golfer will inevitably filter through. Student athletes are typically taught on the range, with a pyramid of balls in arms reach, on a flat lie. They do not compete or play like this.

Simulate

“A goal is nothing but a dream without a plan”

The next corner stone to game like training is simulation, which is closely intertwined with re-creating, however, possesses an extra key component. Intensity. This comes from forming an outcome that student-athletes can construct, psychologically, the same if not more value towards. Simulation directly links to the planning and reviewing of a golf skill. By maximally simulating you provide students with a goal-oriented task, which requires planning, and the reviewing in relation to the specified goal.

Experts in other sports and industries utilize simulation in their everyday (motor skill learning) practice. A great industry to pull from is the medical world. In this industry lives are on the line, people can be fatally injured if a surgeon or doctor makes the wrong decision. To prepare these professionals and to provide the necessary knowledge and memories, simulation to its highest degree is paramount. In 1963, the medical world made it mandatory to complete a certain number of hours simulated practice. Over time, the industry has evolved this practice to make it as real life as possible, hiring actors for patients and building training hospitals. Students perform exams on actor-patients who are specifically trained to follow the details of the case, making the experience as realistic as possible.

Chunking

“We are what we repeatedly do, therefore excellence is a habit”

This corner stone of training is key to understanding and providing athletes opportunities for conducive memory recall for decision making and the firing of correct motor programs. Athletes in golf have traditionally spent more time on a range facility than the golf course, this has a detrimental effect to an elite level of chunking.

Chunking is an athletes ability to break down the information that is presented to him or her, then by using that information, access a previous memory/experience of high level execution or consistent execution, firing off an already learned motor program initiating a more accurate and efficient movement/action relative to the task at hand.

Regulate

“keeping busy and moving isn’t always a good thing, especially if you’re moving in the wrong direction” Matthew Cooke

The final corner stone to game like training is the individualized regulation of a student athletes development. There has been extensive research on self-regulation from a number of sources, however, all are well aligned with each other in that it is a never ending cycle. All high achieving expert performers in all domains partake in some form of regulation. Starting with goals, then to strategies to achieve those goals, and finally reflecting on the results of decided strategies to once again, create goals and plan more strategies. The attainment of expertise in diverse fields requires more than nascent talent, initial interest, and high-quality instruction; It involves personal initiative, diligence, and especially practice. Both the quality and quantity of an experts practice have been linked directly to acquisition and maintenance of high levels of performance.

Learning golf (whole learning)

Repetition is the mother of all skill, if it is followed by the whole learning model.

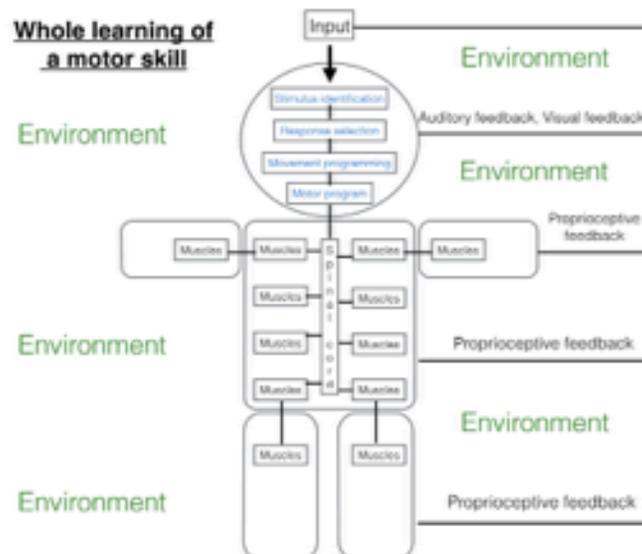
It is much simpler to take all the environmental and outside factors and classify them as input. Input is what the golfer takes into his/her body. These are through the senses of the human body i.e. anticipated feedback; sound, sight, feel, smell, taste and proprioceptive feedback; feel. This, when entering into the human body, creates a stimulus. Stimulus is defined as an event that evokes a specific functional reaction which then takes us onto the stimulus identification stage. Your brain has to process all this input (stimulus identification), to then select a response whether its reactively or proactively, either way its a response. This then sends a signal to the motor programming stage which is designed to assign the corresponding motor program for the task at hand. Once the motor program has been selected and initiated signals are sent down your central nervous system (spinal cord), which engages muscles causing movement.

Example: A player is faced with a downhill, ball below his feet lie, in-between an 8 iron and 9 iron club selection, into the wind with a temperature that could effect the ball by a couple of yards. This is the input stage, which is then processed in the brain causing a response to be selected. That is going to inevitably involve a movement program to be initiated causing movement in some form.

This process must be followed repeatedly in order for golfers to improve their skill of getting the golf ball in the hole (motor skill). If we follow this model in practice players will get better at the whole skill which inevitably improves performance.

If a player hits a shot from the same place, to the same target, with an intense focus on the same outcome of the ball, he or she will experience a decrease in tournament performance and inhibit movement pattern changes. A golfer experiences something different on every single shot in tournament play therefore we must present something different in practice, that is the only way a player will learn. If players practice hitting successive shots the one distance with the same club, I predict that they will get better at hitting successive shots with the same club the one distance. If they practice planning, hitting and reviewing (whole learning) they will get better at planning, hitting and reviewing.

Whole learning of a motor skill

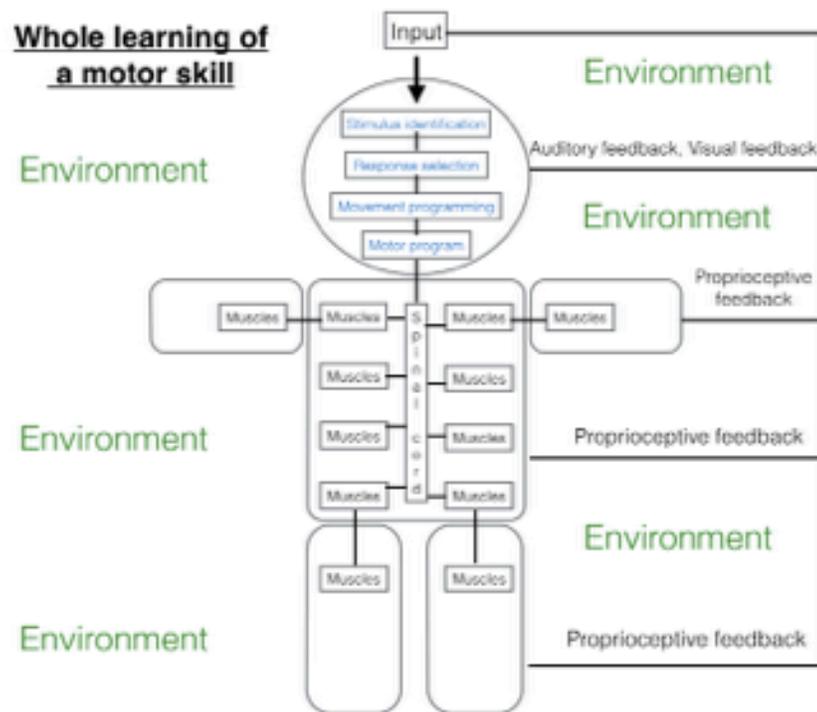


Whole learning of a skill

Deliberate practice in golf uncovered. The word repetition gets thrown around a lot in coaching. 'Repetition is the mother of all skill', this is widely known and believed and quite rightly so. Repetition is the mother all of all skill, but only if it follows the model below. Repetition of the whole learning process is required for anybody to improve their skill set. The general idea of repetition eludes to the idea of repeating a particular movement over and over again. These repetitions do not imprint or stamp in a particular movement, the brain and motor functions do not work that way. We are hardwired to pay attention to change, not repetition. There is less brain activity when the same stimuli is repeated. By repeating a particular task you skip multiple stages of the above model causing a loss of interest. When this happens we usually blame ourselves for our lack of attention and shout at ourselves to focus. To embrace the whole learning theory golfers must keep beginning tasks because beginnings are always the hardest part. When switching tasks, embarking on a new beginning each time, our brains must reconstruct the action plan for what we are about to do. The more mental activity we engage in the greater long-term learning.

Example of whole learning practice:

Putting-
1x 5 foot putt
1x 20 foot putt
1x short chip
1x lob shot



LOOK BETTER IN PRACTICE?

OR

PERFORM BETTER WHEN YOU PLAY?

YOU DECIDE.

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PRACTICE?

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT LEARNING?

**WANT TO LEARN HOW TO BECOME AN
EXPERT AT LEARNING?**

I have spent the last 9 years learning from researchers and academics who are experts in motor learning and cognitive psychology and condensed all the information into the Game Like Training Manual.

I've also put together a series of practice plans giving you detailed instructions for the most effective drills and games you can implement into your training.

Learn more at

www.gameliketraininggolf.com/books