



Assess Your Personal Strengths and Limitations

Your physical makeup needs to be understood and noted as it directly impacts your potential as a player. This doesn't mean you can't improve problem areas and expand your potential, but it does mean that you need to honestly admit that there may be some things you simply can't do. If you think that at an older age you will be able to increase your swing speed to touring pro levels, you are doomed to fail. The saying, age is undefeated, applies to golf, but fortunately doesn't define it. Older golfers can still be good golfers if they follow the structured approach we advocate for any player ... **never lose focus on solid contact**. Physical mapping is obviously most important as you age because of the need to understand and appreciate what you are physically capable of, rather than dwelling on what you used to be able to do. Always remember that a lot of this game involves mental aspects not just physical prowess. Something as simple as playing the right tee box or finally admitting that hitting a stiff shafted driver is not your best option, can turn your game around. Unfortunately, way too much focus is placed on distance above all else. Watching a tour pro launch an eight iron two hundred plus yards to a par three doesn't do much for anyone's self-esteem. Forever chasing five more yards (often further in the wrong direction) is a fool's errand. Your body and skill level do dictate your upper limits, but even those won't be attainable without consistent sweet spot contact.

Manufacturers produce different styles of clubs, a variety of shaft profiles and golf balls geared to different swing speeds. Keeping a journal with impact records and notes regarding your current skill set is a must. This is the info you should rely on as a starting point for equipment purchases and fitting sessions. Hitting balls with unfamiliar clubs, electronically measured in an unnatural environment, is no substitute for having your own field data gathered over time. Sharing this data, along with information on any physical limitations (injuries, surgeries, and conditions) will greatly enhance your chances of a perfect fit and genuine improvement.

Evaluating lessons and tips is an area that should be guided by an honest physical map. Starting lessons with your journal entries and impact records is the first step, but discussing your goals based on what you know you can do is also vital. After two back surgeries, a knee replacement, and the other knee in the early stages of following the first one, I would never start lessons that failed to take those factors into account. The absolute avalanche of online tip articles also needs to be sifted through your physical map to avoid things that just do not apply. In my case, reviews of tour compression golf balls, blade irons and the newest stiff shaft are generally ignored. Tips that involve large shoulder turns, full spinal flexibility and high swing speeds also do not apply. For beginners, who have not even mastered basic swing mechanics, it is most important to start with focusing on good contact. At this stage, physical limitations are less important to worry about than making sure fundamentals are mastered.

There is no need to worry that acknowledging your physical issues means you are conceding that good golf is out of reach. This applies to golfers of any age and even beginners. We all need to accept that some people are more flexible, some are stronger, and still others have the gift of excellent hand eye coordination. You need to work with what you have and focus on changes and equipment purchases that either accentuate your strengths (best club groups and skills) or help smooth out physically limiting factors and gaps in your game.

Always working toward maintaining solid contact while evaluating any changes is the structured approach that will lead to lasting success. Choosing tips you can't execute or buying clubs in a piecemeal fashion with no clear plan will never produce consistency. Under no circumstances should you ever sacrifice contact or fail to verify that good contact has at the very least been maintained, when chasing improvement. Jumping on the treadmill that promises more distance doesn't do any good if you have no control over where the ball might land. LongShot impact labels make it easy and inexpensive to always know and visually verify what is happening to your swing. We are not advocating use for every practice session or round you play, but regular checkups will ease your mind and pay big dividends. We have, however, had numerous testimonials from golfers who check their impact consistency when they have injuries or have somehow lost that feel you have when your swing is in sync. We see stories of impressive injury and permanent physical change workarounds that keep people playing when they might have had to quit. You would be amazed at the corrections that will come to mind naturally as you make adjustments and watch the impact mark move to a different location. Distance from the ball during setup, stance, grip, alignment, spine angle, posture, weight transfer; are just some of the things you can experiment with and verify to make sure you are headed in the right direction.

Many times, changes are counter intuitive and produce the exact opposite result of what you might expect. Moving closer to the ball to eliminate toe hits could work but you might also find maintaining your spine angle through the swing works better and is more comfortable. In my case, working with my own product allowed me to produce an alternate swing to keep me playing while my right knee was awaiting its turn for surgery. I was able to achieve consistent contact while essentially playing on one leg. Being able to play well enough to enjoy my time on the course and hold the pain to a tolerable level bought me an extra two months that season. My idea behind the impact label was to give golfers the means to understand, control, and own their swing so that golf's many benefits could be enjoyed as often and as long as possible.

Own Your Swing will always acknowledge golf's guiding truth; **good golf cannot be achieved or maintained without good contact**. LongShot Products will lead you to, and keep you on, the path to your best game.

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Remember: Practices Makes Perfect ... Unless You Are Practicing Wrong

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