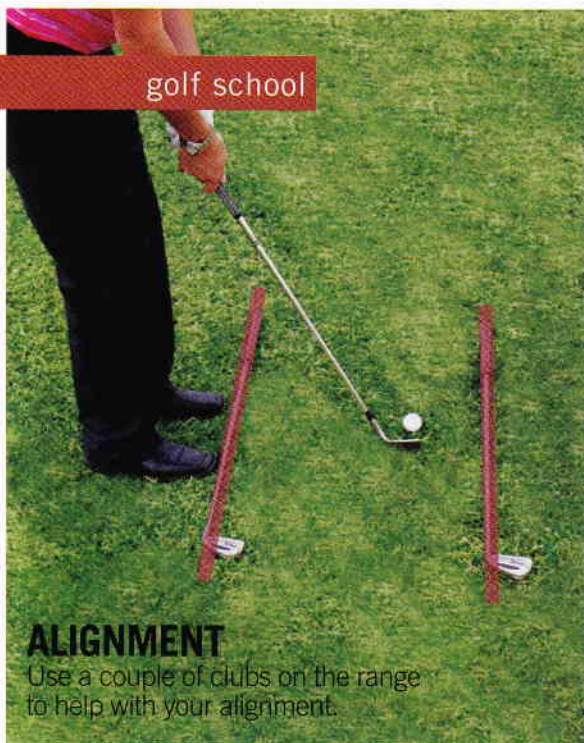


golf school

**ALIGNMENT**

Use a couple of clubs on the range to help with your alignment.

**ON TARGET**

During your warm-up before your round focus on your target rather than thinking of technique.



## How to practice effectively

Here are three styles to ensure your next range session produces great results

by Mike Davis

**H**ow you practice is an important key to learning golf or improving your current skill level. There are three distinctly different ways to practice, with each having a different goal and requiring a different type of mental focus. You must determine which type will best suit your needs.

First is the type of practice needed to learn a new skill, position or movement. Your mental focus should be on what you are doing in the set-up and motion of your body and the club. Review the correct grip, posture and balance for the stroke you are practicing. Lay down several clubs for reference in alignment and ball position. Beginners need to practice in this mode for several weeks to months as they learn the set-up fundamentals and movements required for the various strokes. Experienced golfers will use this type of practice when they change or improve their technique. Ten to 20 shots should be enough to confirm your

mechanics are correct. While this is a necessary step, it is also critical that you move to the next forms of practice as soon as possible.

Second, practice to develop a feel for the new stroke. In short game strokes, this means learning to control distance. In the full swing, you need to get a feel for the ball flight and shot pattern. I recommend variable distance drills where you take several rehearsal strokes looking at the target and feeling the amount of energy (size of stroke) needed for the shot. Use three to six of your own balls and vary the distance by three to 10 feet for each shot. Repeat this drill in three directions—uphill, downhill and level.

Finally, practice in a way that simulates your round on the golf course. Focus on the target and the results, rather than the method or the energy level. I want my students to record their results in small groups of shots. For example, hit three to 10 shots toward a target and list how many

were successfully within a target range. Write it down and see if you are improving, setting reasonable but challenging goals. This type of practice should include the key elements of a routine, which I will cover in detail in a later article.

You should move through each of these types of practice while warming up for a round. Double-check your set-up, and feel the harmony and motion in each stroke. Next, observe the ball flight to get a sense of how your swing is performing that day. Last, play some shots toward a target, going through your routine to prepare for the golf course. The goal is to identify a pattern and play for it, not to produce a desired ball flight. If your shots are going to the right that day, aim a little to the left.

Remember, a new technique is not truly yours until you can perform it on the course, under pressure. **VB**

*Mike Davis is VegasGolfer Magazine's Director of Instruction. He recently earned the coveted title of PGA Master Professional, Instruction. Davis, along with other golf instructors, will be working with our readers to improve their golf games with new instruction pieces each issue.*