

Regimented Routine!



So, how good do you want to be? If you're serious about wanting to improve your game then it's time to put some purpose in your practice.

It is not enough to simply go and hit some balls at the range. You must have a goal and you must be working towards something.

You should also constantly remind yourself that for every minute you're not practicing, someone else is and is getting better than you.

To reach your true potential in this game you have to practice, play, compete, learn, read, watch and train.

All of this is your preparation for the 'Big Moments in Golf'. The purpose of all the blood, sweat and tears is to enable you to:

- Thrive on the back nine of a tournament when you are in contention;

- Roll a great lag putt on the final hole of an event;

- Make a clutch three-foot left-to-right putt on the 18th green to clinch victory;

- Drive it down the centre of the 18th fairway on the final day with water right and bunkers left.

Following is a breakdown of a suggested one-week training regime that is designed to set you on your way.



Attention junior golfers! In the first instalment in a new *Asian Golf Monthly* instructional series, **Chris Smeal**, Director of Instruction at San Diego's Future Champions Golf Academy, reveals a one-week practice routine that will help to set you apart from your peers.

Monday

Play nine holes at a par-three course, specifically working on your distance control with irons.

Keep score with your first ball, but also play an extra ball from between 30 and 40 yards short of green and keep a tally of how many shots you require from that distance. If play is slow and you find yourself waiting for the group ahead then hit additional short chips from the side of the green.

During a 40-minute putting session, set yourself the target of holing 50 putts from three feet.

Test your putting skills with a two-putt, nine-hole game during which the objective is to do no worse than two-putt all nine holes from outside of 20 feet.

The first day of the week should culminate with an evening workout at the gym, focusing on weights and cardio.



Wednesday

It's a short game and range day, commencing with pitching and chipping.

For the first 30 minutes, drop multiple balls in one location and practice repeating the same shot over-and-over again.

The next 30 minutes, practice your scoring around the green. Use one ball to chip and putt out around a green, keeping score. Play as many 'holes' as you have time for ... and even better if you compete with a friend for this exercise.

Now head to the practice bunkers and spend 15 minutes working on different lies and hitting shots that vary your trajectory.

From the sand, head to the putting green and start with a nine-hole stroke play competition. This will give you a good barometer as to how you're stroking the ball.

Staying at the putting green, progress to a green reading drill using sticks to mark your line. This is a good way to ensure you're reading the break correctly.

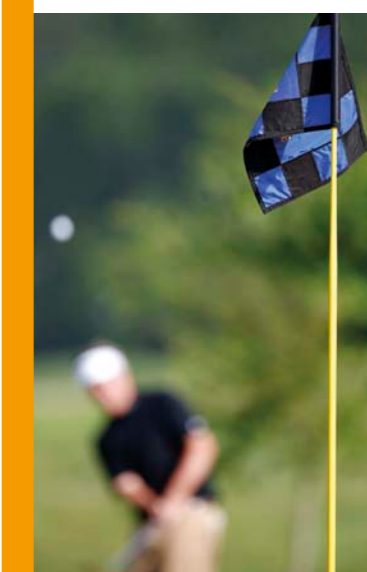
The last exercise with the short stick is to practice lagging putts to within a three-foot radius of the hole demarked with a circle of tees from (a) 30 feet; (b) 40 feet and (c) 50 feet.

For the afternoon, head to the range where the focus will be ball flight.

Work on all the clubs in your bag and try to hit the same shot pattern with each shot. Today, choose whether you want to hit your shots with a slight draw, or a slight fade.

Next, with a view to increasing your club head speed, spend some time swinging with weighted clubs before moving on to practice hitting the driver with maximum speed, while maintaining your balance.

Another evening workout at the gym, focusing on weights and cardio.



Tuesday

Get set for a day at the driving range. To commence this three-hour practice session you should warm up with pitch shots for feel and contact.

Spend seven minutes on each of your wedges – lob wedge, sand wedge and pitching wedge.

Practice hitting high shots and low shots and vary the distances you're aiming with each club.

Also, practice on hitting shots with a full finish and a cut-off, or abbreviated, finish.

On this day, your focus will be hitting odd-numbered iron clubs – nine-iron, seven-iron, five-iron and three-iron.

In order to work on the ball flight, hit three fades and three draws with each club, calling shots on command. If you struggle, keep working on it until you have a good pattern going.

Next, it's onto the fairway woods. Hit between 12 and 18 shots off the ground, working on ball flight pattern. Hit high fades to practice landing the ball softly. Then, using a three-wood, place a short tee in the ground and work on turning the ball over and hitting it further.

Now move on to the driver and work on picking different targets and hitting to a determined fairway.

Do your full pre-shot routine like it's the opening tee shot of a tournament. Track whether you hit fairway, miss right or miss left for each shot. Do this daily and you can stay on top of hitting your fairways.

Finally for this session, play a mock round at the range, based on the next course you plan to play. It's a good drill for your imagination and to see if you can hit good shots by switching clubs rather than pounding the same one over and over again.

The day ends with another evening workout at the gym, this time focusing on cardio and stretching.

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Thursday

It's time to unleash you on the course. After three straight days of practice, go ahead and play a full 18-hole round, keeping your score. If you are working on something particular in your game and you miss a shot, then drop another ball and try and fix it. It's important to balance out scoring style practice rounds with practice rounds to work on things. After your round, head to the range and practice any areas of weakness or replay some key shots you could have improved on. Tonight's gym activity is a cardio workout.

Saturday

A two-hour morning session at the short-game practice area focusing on pitching from distances of 30 yards, 40 yards and 50 yards followed by some putting. After lunch, it's an 18-hole round. Play from the red tees and concentrate on shooting as low as you can go.



Friday

Following four days of solid practice, today is a session of just 1½ hours split into 30-minute segments on putting, chipping and bunker play. Start on the putting green by holing 50 three-footers and then test yourself with the lag putting 'drawback' drill. In this exercise, every time you miss a putt you must go back one club length for the next putt. For the chipping session you'll require a towel which should be laid down and used as your landing spot. Then have a nine-hole chipping contest using a seven-iron, nine-iron and sand wedge. Keep score with each of the three clubs. A good trajectory drill from the bunker is to lay the towel on the green and try and get the ball to land on it. See how much you can spin the ball. Weights and cardio are the order of the day in the evening gym workout.



Sunday

To finish the working week, an 18-hole morning round with friends. Following lunch, devote time to the areas of your game that you feel are in most need of improvement.



CHRIS SMEAL

Chris Smeal (PGA) is the Founder and Owner of Future Champions Golf (FCG). Based in San Diego, FCG specialises in the development of junior golfers, from beginner to collegiate level players. With programmes for all ages and skill levels, the FCG Academy grows the game of golf as well as producing some of the best young golfers in the United States. The FCG National Tour has become one of the premier organisations in junior golf. Smeal's *Asian Golf Monthly* articles will focus on the development of junior golfers, offer advice to parents and highlight junior golfers from Asia who have succeeded on the Future Champions Golf Tour. "Asia is a huge market for junior golf currently, but it also is still in the developmental stage. The goal of my articles will be to reach as many junior golfers as possible and help them in how to succeed in the world of junior golf and take their game to the next level." For further details on FCG, please visit www.FutureChampionsGolf.com