



Take Control Of Your Life With Hypnosis:

Eliminate negative habits; Create healthy changes; Achieve optimal well-being.

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LET'S GO GOLFING!

Now that temperatures have finally moderated here in the Northeast, thoughts for many of us turn to the joys (and exasperations) of golf! We're excited about getting back on the course, either with regular playing partners or sharing tee times with whoever is available. We haul out the clubs and make sure we've got plenty of balls and tees. Maybe we treat ourselves to some new balls, even some "top of the line" ones that might help improve our scores. In short, the inactivity of a long, hard winter gives way to the optimism and excitement of playing golf. After all, isn't that our reward for surviving another Maine winter?

Most of us don't realize we'll probably play about the same as we did in the past. But whatever your age and stage, and whether you are a once-in-awhile recreational player, a weekend athlete, a serious team member, a collegiate standout, or a seasoned professional, hypnosis can help you improve your game! While it cannot make you into something you are incapable of becoming, hypnosis can help you maximize and optimize your ability and potential.

Golfers face the same obstacles to success that people face in their every-day lives. The biggest is fear and it comes in many forms. [1] Fear of failure is common in sports and, like all fears, causes tightness and constriction in individuals, thereby hindering performance. Fear of success creates obstacles as does fear of humiliation, which often takes hold as golfers address their ball on the first tee in front of a gallery of spectators or simply the other members of the foursome. Even competition itself can produce a feeling of intimidation that handicaps results. Hypnosis can help athletes release mental blocks, fears, and beliefs that limit and short-circuit their success.

One of the most important aspects of using the subconscious mind for athletic performance is the development of positive attitudes. Negative thoughts that affect performance can be changed or eliminated and replaced with positive ones. This process enables an athlete to improve skills and enjoy the sport without the hindrance of frustration, discouragement and anger caused by episodes of poor performance. [2] Hypnosis also builds self-confidence and enables a person to focus on a successful outcome, rather than a poor performance. [3]

A 24-year-old assistant golf professional was preparing for his Player Ability Test. To pass, and move up the PGA ladder, he needed to score 76/76 – 152 for 36 holes. Prior to our first session, his best score for

a round of 18 holes was 80. As we reviewed possible influences in his life that had contributed to his only having scored 80 on one occasion (he felt he had the ability to score lower), it became apparent that his father's constantly negative, critical attitude toward him had been the major factor. After the young man released those inhibiting influences, he imagined playing the best he possibly could and reinforced that with specific visualizations. He also imagined incorporating a strong sense of confidence within himself. He used his conditioned-response word and personalized CD to enhance the changes he had made in the two office sessions.

To give him every opportunity for success, I suggested he replace his regular caddy (his father), with a more positive person. He arranged for a close friend to carry his bag in the 36-hole PAT. Afterwards, he said he shot a 77/76 – 153 and missed passing by one stroke. As we discussed how well he had done and how he had felt, he volunteered that his friend had to drop out at the last minute and his father became his caddy once again. One can only wonder how low the score might have been if someone else had carried the bag.

Before the young man re-took the PAT two weeks later and two weeks after that, I encouraged him to return for a "fine-tuning" session. He was evasive and non-committal. I learned later that family pressures against hypnosis were conflicting him and he did not return to Hypno-Health. In those next two PAT attempts, he shot 82/79 – 161 and 86/86 – 172.

"Anchoring" and "mental rehearsal" are two other important hypnotic techniques included in this last example. In anchoring, a memory or image of athletic excellence is recalled or imagined. When the client mentally reaches the peak of that performance, the associated emotion is anchored or reinforced, producing what is commonly known as muscle memory. That memory or positive feeling is then automatically released during peak performance times. [4] Mental rehearsal can be even more productive than physical practice. Imagining success, as done so consistently by Mary Lou Retton, gold-medal-gymnast at the 1984 Olympics, can involve all the senses and may be the ultimate key to superlative performance. [5]

A 74-year-old gentleman came to Hypno-Health to correct his golf swing. When practicing, his swing was always smooth. But whenever he played a round of golf, his swing with a driver and long irons changed. Many years of having played tennis competitively, which he stopped before he "wanted to," caused him to grip the clubs too tightly, resulting in a compromised swing and erratic ball strikes. He mentally released the tennis influence and imagined his swing being consistently smooth and fluid, just like in practice. He reinforced the new swing in both the conscious and self-hypnotic states with a conditioned-response word and personalized CD. In two letters (paraphrased below), he expressed his delight with the results.

"I thought it best to write in my state of elation. I have profited immensely. Last week I surprised myself by some wonderfully comfortable 3 woods (a partner said: "my what a smooth swing"). Yesterday, I played 18 holes without one of those "grabs from the top" - all my drives and 3 woods were swings!! Marvelous! I am delighted with these changes and send you many thanks".

"In case there was any doubt about the enthusiasm in my last note to you, here is a bit more ammunition. Monday I played in the Maine Seniors Tourney and had a 38 on the front nine, the lowest 9 hole score I have ever had on any course anywhere. Today, at a local course, I had an 80, the lowest score I have ever had for 18 holes anywhere. Yes, I was putting well today, but none of this would have happened if I didn't have a smooth, consistent swing off the tee and fairway - my bugaboo of the past".

- [1] www.arizonacenterforhypnosis.com/athletic.html
[2] Athletic Performance brochure, researched by the National Guild of Hypnotists educational faculty.
[3] [www.northshorehypnosis.com/Athletic Performance.html](http://www.northshorehypnosis.com/Athletic%20Performance.html)
[4] www.LPGMindworks.com/sports.html
[5] Athletic Performance brochure, researched by the National Guild of Hypnotists educational faculty.

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Remember: *Hypnosis can be done in the office, by phone and via Skype.*