

# The Pre-Shot Routine

by DENNISE HUTTON

**G**olf is a series of repetitive events. The more proficient we become, the fewer the number of "events" it takes to play.

From tee to green these events are remarkably similar. Whether driving from the tee or hitting an iron to the green, the mechanics of the swing are almost identical. Also identical are the activities leading up to the swing. The actions we perform prior to the swing form an integral part of the shot itself. They form part of what we call the Pre-Shot Routine.

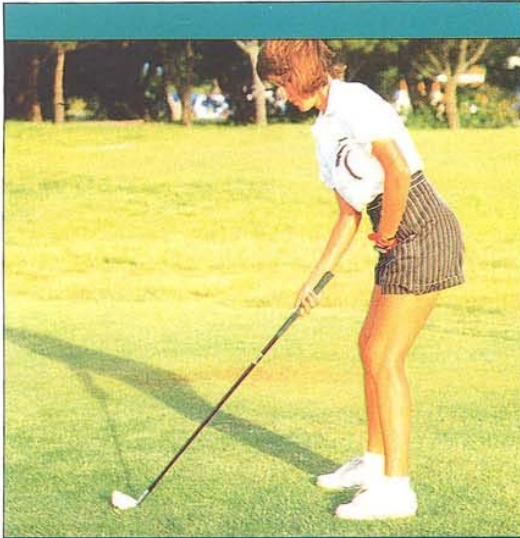
This routine sets us for the swing. It ensures we are in the correct position at address, aligned to the target and we can then mentally picture the shot to be played.



**V**isualise the line. Always walk into the ball from behind. Picture a line running from your ball to the target. With practice you will visualise the line and mentally see the ball travelling down this path.



**P**lace the feet together directly opposite the ball and square to the target line you have mentally prepared. This can be best illustrated with the two parallel golf clubs and a third perpendicular.



The right hand is the one that dictates your distance from the ball and this comes next. With your elbow bent into the body at the correct angle, place your left hand on the club. Ensure your body angle is set to the address position. Remember we bend our body from the hips (not the waist), with the back straight.



Take a small step with your left foot, a larger one with your right. The stance should be the width of the shoulders, weight evenly distributed, knees flexed. The width of the stance depends on the club being used. In general, the longer the club, the wider the stance, the longer the step with the right foot.



Take up the correct grip with both hands. Check your distance ensuring your left arm is firm and appears to be an extension of the club. And finally check that your feet, hips, and shoulders are all parallel and pointing slightly left of your target line.

Now you are ready, the pre-shot routine completed. With practice this will become second nature. It is often a good idea when introducing new systems to your game to write a small checklist and use it out on the practice fairway and if necessary out on the course.

Now before we finish, one last piece of advice. The pre-shot routine is just that — pre shot. Once we have performed the routine and prepared our stance and set up — forget about it. It is now time to hit the ball. We need not worry about that pre-shot routine until the next time we step up to the ball.