

Sean's Tips for playing golf in the winter season.

With the cold weather upon us the following tips will help keep you and your game in tip top shape!

- It is important to stretch before playing golf anytime of the year; however in the winter months it is imperative. On the first tee or at the practice range spend valuable time doing some golf stretches. I prefer a "head-to-toe" approach to stretching, because it provides a way for me to remember to include all the major muscle groups in sequence. Hold each stretch for fifteen to twenty seconds. Avoid stretching beyond the point of pain, and never bounce to stretch. Stretch one side of the body, then the other. Repeat the stretches three or four times for each side. An easy stretch to do to improve your shoulder turn is to put a golf club behind your back and between arms, bend from the waist slightly and slowly rotate your shoulders level as if you are making a backswing and a forward swing. This is only one stretching exercise like I said before make sure to stretch from your head to your toes and that will make your first tee-shot much more comfortable!
- The way you dress in the winter season will have significant impact on your swing or stroke. Try to avoid wearing tight fitting, heavy outerwear. This will hamper your ability to create the proper body rotation and not allow your body and arms to swing freely. When heading to the course on those chilly mornings dress first with thermal long johns and then several loose fitting layers that you can shed when the temperatures rise, a lined sweater is perfect because it keeps the heat in and the cold wind out. Keeping you head, hands and feet warm will also make those winter rounds much less frigid. Wear a hat or toque, winter golf shoes and warm socks, winter golf gloves along with a pair of big golf mitts to wear in between golf shots. Hot shot hand and toe warmers will also take the bite out of the winter chill.
- When swinging the golf club in cold weather never over swing, always swing within yourself focusing on maintaining a steady tempo throughout your swing and good balance. During cold weather, the air is denser or heavier, which slows the flight of the ball and the distance it will travel. Use more club than normal for a given distance. For example, a 6-iron might have to be used for a distance that would normally require a 7 iron, and so on. This will ensure that you are hitting solid shots.
- The colder temperature will make the golf ball harder to compress. Use lower compression golf balls than you normally play, in fact, ladies golf balls work well for this time of year. Graphite shafts will also lesson the terrible shock from off center hits.

I hope this will help make your winter golf games a little more enjoyable, talk to a Burnaby Golf Professional for any additional help you may need!

Sean Spottiswood

CPGA Associate Golf Professional - Riverway

