

## Change Your Thinking, Stop Your Slice By Rick Semple

Each year, the same phrase reverberates on practice ranges and fairways around the world: *If I could only fix my slice!* For many, it has been an ongoing battle in their quest for golf improvement. Too often, golfers have tried quick fixes or surefire golf tips and training aids with some short-term success, only to ultimately return to the frustration of seeing their shots curve sharply from left to right.

What most slicers don't realize is that the key to correcting a golf slice and improving the swing is in their mental game. That is where true long-term, enduring golf improvement begins – in the mind. You can try all the tricks and training aids in the world, but if you are still thinking and saying, *I'll never fix this slice*, or *I always hit off to the right*, that will inhibit the benefits of your physical practice. The secret is to approach practice and play with a proper mental framework which helps you to relax and be more receptive to the flow of a smooth swing, positive expectations, and pleasing results.

Establishing a proper mental framework is one of the core skills of mental golf that leads to golf improvement. You have heard the saying, *change your thinking, change your life*, promoted by Brian Tracy and other positive thinkers. This approach also holds true for all aspects of the golf game, including curing a slice. Just as you can change your thinking to help stop a habit, so too can you change your thinking to stop your golf slice. You can transform an *I can't* outlook to an *I can* outlook and develop a positive foundation that leads to much more favorable results on the golf course. If you want proof of this, just watch and listen to anyone who has made significant changes to their game – their positive, confident outlook is sure to shine through.

The steps to changing your thinking and stopping your slice are not difficult, and they can be done by golfers of any age or experience level. What they do require is belief in their power and persistence in their practice. Here is what you can do:

- 1. Identify negative, obstructing thoughts that may be limiting your game.** This involves a conscious, focused effort in paying attention to your habitual thoughts. What do you say to yourself prior to or during your practice and play? Examples include, *I'll never fix this slice*, or, *I always hit off to the right*.
- 2. Change negative, obstructing thoughts to positive, encouraging thoughts.** Once you are aware of your negative thought patterns, you can make a conscious effort to change them and get into the habit of saying and thinking more encouraging, optimistic things to yourself. Examples include, *I have the ability to hit great drives*, *I am learning to draw the ball*, and, *I see the ball landing where I want it to land*.

3. **Be receptive to new ideas and techniques that can improve your game.** As you change your mindset, you open yourself up to a better flow of ideas, feelings, and golfing techniques. New ideas for techniques may come to you, and techniques you tried before may work better. Be attuned to them and allow them to happen. With this allowing, you can enjoy reduced effort and better results in your game.
4. **Blend your improved inner game with your outer physical practice.** It is important to practice both the inner and outer game at the same time. Don't think you just need to say a few positive things to yourself as you head to the course, and that's it. You need to be thinking these new thoughts throughout your practice shots, your drives, your chips, your putting, and your movement along the course. Your new mental outlook will help to make your practice range and entire golf experience more successful when *both* mental and physical are done at the same time.
5. **Be persistent.** Continuous application of the new mental approach is needed in order to truly change your thinking and get a long-term cure of your slice. A few positive thoughts now and then won't do it. Keep thinking and saying the positive, encouraging thoughts to yourself, even if you encounter a setback and hit one off to the right. As with anything, persistency pays off.

So, the key to stopping your slice and improving your golf game lies within. By blending these changes in your inner game with your renewed outer physical practice, you've got a winning combination. Right now, you can start on the road within to changing your thinking and stopping your slice. With continual practice you can apply this approach to other aspects of your golf game and even your life. *You can do it!*