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Home Work

Practice these fundamentals to keep your swing sharp.

BY LYNN MARRIOTT AND PIA NILSSON

THERE ARE THREE different types of practice: warm-up, maintenance and preparation. Warm-up practice is what you do before a round to get your body ready to play; maintenance practice is what you do between rounds to keep your swing and game functioning properly; and preparation practice is what you do to prepare for the future, whether it's gearing up for an important tournament or adding a new shot to your arsenal.

Maintenance practice may be the most neglected, especially by amateurs. Just as your car requires regular attention, your swing's fundamentals—grip, posture, alignment and ball position—need regular tune-ups as well. Below are three examples of maintenance practice. Do these drills every few weeks and you'll see your consistency and scoring improve.

▶ **POSTURE: A STABLE BASE**

Address the ball as you normally would and have someone gently push you backward, as Pia is doing (*left*), and forward. If you lose your balance, it means your center of gravity is too high. To correct this, focus on your core and feel your center of gravity getting lower in your body. You'll swing more solidly.



▶ **BALL POSITION: DISTANCE FROM TOES**

With an instructor observing you, assume a good set-up position with your 7-iron. Note the ball position. Slide a club between your feet so the grip meets the ball and mark the point on the shaft where your toe line crosses it. (Here, we're using the label.) This mark serves as your reference point: The longer the club, the farther you stand from it and the ball.



▶ **AIM: CHECK YOUR CLUBFACE**

When you set up to the ball, you should aim the clubface first, then align your body. To check your aim, put a tee down in front of the clubhead, perpendicular to the face, aiming at the target. Step back behind the tee and look: Is the clubface pointing to the target? Do this with five different clubs and five targets. ●

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JACOB FELLÄNDER. LYNN MARRIOTT: SWEATER AND SHIRT BY BROOKS BROTHERS; PANTS BY TALBOTS; SHOES BY FOOTJOY. PIA NILSSON: SWEATER BY BROOKS BROTHERS; PANTS BY SPORT HALEY; SHOES BY ECCO. HAIR, MAKEUP AND STYLING BY LAURA FLAGLER