

# BE REALISTIC WITH YOUR GOALS

By Ryan Brickley - PGA  
Director of Golf – Rocky River Golf Club

One of the most difficult things an instructor encounters is students who don't understand the commitment needed to become an excellent player. In order to develop the confidence in your golf game that is needed to play well, the first step is to be honest about how much time you can commit to practice and play.



Golf, unlike a lot of other sports, gives us a glimpse of what greatness feels like when we sink a long putt, hit a perfect drive that splits the fairway, or better yet, find the bottom of the hole on a par-3 with a hole in one! These are what make it such a great game, make it so fun for all ages and ability to play. However, I also feel it can create false hope for some players.

The one goal I hear most often from my students is that they would “like to be more consistent”. My next question is always to find out how much they practice and play.



practice, but want to be “consistent”.

You wouldn't find someone trying to speak a foreign language by learning a few words twice a month! My point here is that consistently good golf requires diligent effort over a sustained period of time. Most players have the necessary talent to play well but they must commit themselves to the process of improvement.

The first step in establishing this consistency is to set realistic and attainable goals. These should be both short term, and long term, with an established plan to achieving both.

One of the first steps with your goals should also be to find a qualified teacher that you feel comfortable with. Once you find a good teacher, have them help you establish your goals immediately.

Having a plan in place helps you track your progress and should make the journey to your goals a lot more fun.

Also be sure to schedule the lessons far enough apart to allow plenty of practice time. It is much better to reschedule a lesson than to come for the next appointment without putting in the time and having a supervised practice session as your pro repeats the previous lesson.

It all sounds fairly simple so far, right? It is simple, but it is not easy. It is easy to find a pro and take lessons. The hard part is to honor your commitment and persist when the progress is slow. Try not to be too aware of your score.



How many times have you heard someone tell the story of how they just needed to par the last two holes for their career round only to finish with two double bogeys?

Instead of having a goal of shooting a certain score, try to play an entire round where you fully commit to each shot, and focus on your pre-shot routine for every swing. Or simply focus on hitting a higher percentage of solid shots than normal. This way, you are much less likely to become frustrated during the round, and can stick with your commitment to the process of improvement.

By changing your expectations and your approach to practicing and playing, you should have no problem becoming, “more consistent”.

## REALISTIC and ATTAINABLE GOALS

Find a qualified teacher

Establish your goals immediately

Track your progress

Allow plenty of practice time

Stick with your commitment