

Goals: they are like targets for your mind

There's a thing in our brain known as the the reticular activation system. It works exactly like a missile does. Did you know that when you reach out your hand to pick up your cup of coffee that it is NEVER moves in a straight line! It is ALWAYS moving to the right and then the left all the way to your destination. The cup. Never straight!

Missiles work the same way. They never move toward their target in a straight line. EVER. It goes "straight" by constantly moving right, then adjusting and moving back to the left. Then adjusting again... back toward the right...and so on. This is incredible knowledge my fellow golfer.

Your mind works exactly the same way! You NEVER move directly toward a goal. You bounce left and right and back again in order to reach your destination. Much like a missile. But what do a missile and a well tuned mental game have in common?

A TARGET! I think we can all agree that a missile without a target is just an expensive piece of scrap metal. Our minds are the same way. Think about this for a second. Without goals your mind is like a blind man stabbing in the dark trying to cut the moon!

My approach to goal setting is less like traditional "goal setting" programs, and more like the missile. It simply needs a target and it will do what it was designed to do. HIT IT!

Use the Overview approach

What are your golf goals for the year? Ok, thinking about your goals for a whole year might be a bit of a stretch for many of you, yet this is essential as it provides the "overview" of your monthly and shorter term goals.

For example, each year I'll have a goal to improve in a specific area of my game. Last year it was to improve my long iron play. This was the main area of concern in my game and was preventing me from shooting really low scores (really low *to me*). So when I went to the range to practice and when I was playing casual rounds I would focus more on this area.

What area of your game feels in need of improvement the most. The area that overall gets in the way of playing better golf, more consistently? Choose one and place additional attention on it. Not at the exclusion of the rest of your game, of course, but definitely increase your effort here.

Here's what I recommend you consider...

Focus on # fairways hit: this is a great way to have an "overview" mindset to your entire game. To your scoring. Focusing on score is, for most every player in the game, counterproductive and serves to make them worse in most cases! So keep track of fairways hit as a clear method of monitoring your driving efficiency.

Greens hit in reg.: now track how many greens you hit per round. It doesn't matter if you're a 27 handicap, a 12 or scratch. Over time you'll notice the balance between fairways and greens.

Up and downs: when you miss a green how many strokes, on average, does it take you to get the ball in the hole? This your "up and down" stats. This is probably the most glaring area for high handicappers and in fact is the difference between a 9 and a 4 handicap. The short game.

Putts per round: I prefer this stat more than the next one as it considers everything about your putting game. It is a great measurement of your "overall" putting skill. And this is what this approach to "goals" is all about. Find your average then set a goal to improve that average by at least 2. Stretch yourself but make it real!

Putts per green hit: this is the typical tour stat. How many putts do you take when you do hit a green? Many people are often surprised when they find that hitting more greens didn't improve their scores. They ended up having more dreaded 3 putts! Sometimes missing a green beneath the hole leaving an easy up and down is easier than hitting a green on the front edge with the pin at the back leaving an 85 foot putt!

These are the best ways to set goals for your year around areas of your game. It is more of a general, larger frame perspective. Yet it keeps your attention on specific areas at the same time. You will find steady progress using this method, I assure you.

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<http://wholemindgolf.com>

Stop Playing "Half-Brained" Golf