

# Mastering Golf by Watching Others

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by Tim Brunson, PhD

The first step to mastering anything is to load your brain with as much relevant information regarding that endeavor. This is especially true for mastering the game of golf. While practice appears to be the key, it takes a tremendous dedication to the sport to spend sufficient time on the golf course to attain a respectable level of expertise. So, if you are a business professional who can only play a round once or twice a week, you may find yourself constantly lagging behind many of your friends. Fortunately, there are other solutions. This is where I come in.

In order to achieve a high level of skill in any endeavor your brain must contain sufficient information. This is stored as networks of neurons, which are stored in the areas that are relevant to your activity. For instance, the mere act of gripping your club for a putt requires the formation of specific networks. At some point you either were shown how to do this or you learned by observing others or from an instructional book or video. Then as you grasped your club - and each time that you do so subsequently - the information is modified as you begin developing your competency. Again, performing the action repetitively is most certainly a way to install information. But notice the role of observation. Don't discount the value of watching masterful players, the pros, and even your fellow players. This has a much larger impact than you think.

When you observe others your brain is processing your perceptions at a blazingly fast speed - which is a far greater speed than you will achieve through actual practice. Thanks to a special type of brain cell called bimodal neurons, you rapidly translate perceptions into understanding. And, the more that the brain encounters a specific idea or observed behavior the thicker the associated networks become. Think of this as building up brain muscle. Therefore, considering the "use it or lose it" concept, by constantly observing previously understood actions and adding new experiences will literally strengthen the parts of your brain associated with mastering a skill. Although the adage "practice makes perfect" may be true, you can rephrase this more accurately by saying that "continual observation makes perfect even faster."

There is another exciting factor here when it comes to the power of observation. An exciting brain science discovery from the end of the last century was that of mirror neurons. In order to understand why these cells, which are located throughout your brain, are so important, think for a moment about watching someone else eat your favorite desert. As you see them place a spoonful in their eager mouth, you begin to salivate. Why? Mirror neurons allow your brain to react to observed behavior as if you are performing the act. Therefore, when you watch Tiger Woods complete a perfect swing, both your mirror neurons and bimodal neurons instantly improve your competency by creating new neural networks in your brain.

Folks the story does not end there. Even though observation is a faster way of building competency than practice, there is another way to vastly accelerate the development of masterful performance. The problem is that there is a part of the brain that specifically resists learning and change. If only

you could get that retarding factor out of the way, the speed at which new information that new competency-building information is acquired has no practical limit. Imagine getting the benefit of a round of golf during just fifteen minutes. Believe me, this is a scientifically established fact. If you can learn to just get out of your own way, your ability to acquire and install the skills required professional-level golfing is at your fingertips. This is what I focus on in my various golf mind training products.

[The International Hypnosis Research Institute](#) is a member supported project involving integrative health care specialists from around the world. We provide information and educational resources to clinicians. Dr. Brunson is the author of over 150 [self-help and clinical](#) CD's and MP3's.

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