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How to: Play the right ball



The golf ball can save you the most shots of any piece of golf equipment you carry in your bag, yet it is often the most overlooked essential ingredient to scoring. **Cleveland Golf/Srixon Short Game Ambassador Ben Clayton** explains why a trip to the company's Centre of Excellence for a golf ball custom fit could result in serious shot savings.

The golf ball is the most common purchase we make and depending on your skill level, and how many balls you lose, you could be spending hundreds of pounds a year buying golf balls. Understandably, you want to keep costs down, but by choosing a bargain ball you could be doing your scores some serious harm.

Srixon offer a free golf ball custom fitting service that will help you identify the right golf ball to suit your game. A one-hour session at the company's Centre of Excellence in Maidenhead will take you through the key scoring clubs in your bag in order to find a golf ball that is perfectly suited to your every golfing need.

Cleveland Golf/Srixon Centre of Excellence Manager Dean Cracknell says: "I'll start by asking the golfer some general questions about their game, to get an overview of what their needs are, and whether they are after something specific

like more distance or greater accuracy. I'll then get the player to hit shots with three different clubs in the bag – wedge, a mid-iron and driver, using a selection of different golf balls from the Srixon line. Their ball flight will be recorded by our state-of-the-art Trackman launch monitor and the data used to help identify which golf ball suits all aspects of the players game."

By the end of the custom fit the golfer leaves with a recommendation for a Srixon golf ball that can potentially tick all the boxes – more distance, improved accuracy and greater feel.

It is not uncommon for the golfer to find a ball that boosts clubhead speed and distance, reduce your dispersion for greater accuracy, and improve your spin for control and feel.

Best of all, it could actually save you money, as you might find you should be using a ball that is less expensive than the one you currently choose.

Tip 1: Use a softer core



Most golfers suffer from a lack of control around the greens and with their approach shots, failing to find that elusive spin and stop. By choosing a golf ball with a softer core than you think you need you will automatically gain control as the golf ball will be more responsive and receptive. This will be particularly beneficial for players with slower clubhead speeds, as the softer core will help boost these figures.

Tip 3: Consider the price carefully



Don't assume that the most expensive golf ball is the best ball for you. The Srixon Z-Star, for instance, is a premium golf ball designed for the Tour professional and better player with a fast clubhead speed. A mid-handicapper with a slower clubhead speed will find that they don't hit the ball as far or as straight using this top of the range golf ball as they do Srixon's best-selling two-piece golf ball, the AD333, for example. But if in doubt, book yourself into the Centre of Excellence to find out.

Tip 2: Think 'pitch and putt'



You'll only ever hit a driver 14 times during a round of golf, but you'll play 18 approach shots and take an average of 36 putts, so it is far more important to choose a golf ball that suits your needs around the green, as these account for a much greater percentage of your shots. When choosing a golf ball try to think which ball you'd prefer to play around a 'pitch and putt' course.

Tip 4: Club up and swing smoothly



Finally remember the golf ball will perform best when struck sweetly out of the centre of the club. Many amateurs suffer because they try to hit the ball too hard, resulting in miss-hits. My advice is to take one more club than you need, shorten your swing to three-quarters the length and swing smoothly. You'll find far greater consistency from your golf ball using this controlled swing.

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