

Buying Starter and Intermediate Clubs

For someone getting started in golf expensive golf clubs are not necessary. It takes a certain level of proficiency before a golfer can appreciate expensive, high tech golf clubs. At the same time, many sets that include woods and irons are available for \$250-\$600. There are also some very bad sets in lower price ranges that can make the game impossible for anyone. Here are some things you need to consider when buying good starter and intermediate golf clubs:

Always buy stainless steel heads.

Inexpensive clubs are made of a zinc oxide that look great in the store but do not perform well. They tend to break and the porous metal is impossible to clean. Zinc oxide clubs do not provide much "feel" and often have irregular shaped heads.

Most stainless steel clubs in this category will have "Stainless Steel" printed on the clubhead. It is not always possible to distinguish between a stainless steel and zinc oxide finish. Avoid clubs that say "Stainless Alloy".

Some clubs have other metals like titanium, tungsten, and copper added to the club head, these cost more and probably are not worth the added expense. We suggest spending more money on a better shaft than an exotic club head.

Are graphite shafts necessary? If you want to keep costs down and still have clubs that will perform well, purchase steel shafted irons. Inexpensive graphite shafts are usually inconsistent and can make the game impossibly difficult. Miles of Golf routinely tests all of the clubs we sell to be sure they are up to our standards. We also only deal with companies with good warranty policies because graphite shafts tend to break more easily than steel shafts.

Try clubs before you purchase them. If you have played at all, you will notice a difference between clubs. You will especially notice a difference between graphite and steel shafted clubs. How these clubs "feel" and what flight the ball takes is an important consideration when selecting your clubs. If you have played very little, testing clubs may not be very helpful in making your selection.

Have the clubs fit for length. If you are particularly tall or short, you may require longer or shorter clubs. Clubs of improper length will make the game harder. More expensive clubs address other club fitting issues that become more important as you become a more proficient player.

Save money for instruction. Don't spend your entire golf budget on new clubs. Good golf requires a good understanding of the fundamentals of the game. The academies at Miles of Golf can provide both individual and group instructional options.

Buying Wedges

Proper wedge selection is the key to hitting shots closer to the hole. Here are the key factors in choosing the right wedge:

1. Loft and Gapping. Making sure all of your wedges have the proper loft is critical to maintaining consistent distance spacing, or gapping. Most companies will recommend that you maintain a 4-6 degree spacing between each wedge. Players with faster swing speeds will see better trajectory and distance with gapping in the lower end of that range while slower speed players should gap their wedges farther apart for maximum performance. Since most modern pitching wedges have 44-47 degrees of loft, a gap wedge should have 49-53 degrees of loft, a sand wedge should have 54-56, and a lob

wedge should have 58 or more. Wedges are available with as much as 64 degrees of loft.

2. Bounce. Bounce is the angle created between the sole line of the golf club (the line from the leading edge to the trailing edge) and the ground line at address. It can greatly influence how a wedge will interact with the ground. Generally, players fall into one of three categories when hitting wedge shots: picker/sweeper, digger/driver, or neutral. Pickers/sweepers are players who have a shallower attack angle and take very shallow divots (if any at all) and will have an easier time hitting wedges with less bounce. Conversely, diggers/drivers are much steeper in attack angle and take deep, long divots on most shots. Diggers/drivers should see better results hitting higher bounce wedges. A player who feels he/she is neither type or who wants the most versatility with their wedges can opt for a medium bounce option.

3. Spin. Because the USGA has restrictions on how the grooves on a wedge are designed, most wedges will be very close to the legal limit of how much spin they produce. Different companies have explored various options such as adding more grooves, milling the face of the club, or even adding laser-cut grooves, all with the intent to maximize spin rate.

4. Wedge Fitting. In general, the specs for length, lie angle, and grip size of a wedge should closely resemble or match the fitting specs of a player's irons. Wedges will normally have steel shafts in order to play more consistently, although graphite shafts can be ordered. There are different color finishes to choose from and different shaped club heads which may fit a player's eye. When selecting a wedge, a player may focus more on the look and feel which they prefer.

Buying a Putter

Putting is 40-45% of your total score, make sure your putter fits. Here are six considerations Miles of Golf feels are important when choosing a putter:

1. Proper length

Putter length varies, but is typically between 33-36 inches and depends upon the height and putting posture of the golfer. Most tour players use shorter putters because they are putting with their arms extended to eliminate hand movements in their putting stroke. Putters can easily be made longer or shorter to accommodate every golfer. If a putter is too short you may be too on top of the ball and your eyes will be outside the ball, if it is too long your eyes may be too far inside.

2. Putter balance

Putters are either "face balanced" or "toe weighted". To determine if a putter is face balanced, lay it on a flat surface with the head free to rotate. If the head rotates so it is horizontal to the ground, it is face balanced. If the toe droops, it is considered to be toe weighted. There are varying amounts of toe weight and not every putter will behave the same. If your stroke is straight back and through, face balanced putters generally perform the best. If you arc the putter, you should consider a toe weighted putter. Once you know your preference, you can eliminate many putters from your selection process.

3. The sole must be flat to the ground

If a putter is not flat to the ground, it will be difficult to roll the ball straight and to see your intended line. If the toe is up in the air the putter needs to be flattened, heel in the air it needs to be bent upright. Before making any changes, be sure your eyes are directly over the ball when you putt.

4. Alignment is key

Alignment of the putter is the key to making putts. Dave Kendall, founder of the Kendall Academy at Miles of Golf, says: "If the putter is not lined up to the target, it is an accident if the ball goes in the hole." It is clear that some putters are easier for a golfer to line up than others. The single most important criteria in selecting a putter is finding one that you can line up to the target.

5. Getting the ball rolling. Putters have loft just like other golf clubs. In general, most putter lofts are around 2-4 degrees. You need some loft to get the ball out of the small depression it rests in and get it rolling. If your hands are in front of the ball at impact, loft needs to be added to the putter. Conversely, if your hands are behind the ball at impact, the putter loft should be reduced. Putters can be bent to different lofts. We use a Mitchell Digital Lie/Loft machine to adjust putters for each individual.

6. Grips: Thick vs Thin

Putting usually involves feel for rolling the ball the precise distance and control to send it on the correct line. The grip on the handle of your putter can affect both. If you are struggling on the greens, you may need to examine an alteration in grips. Thicker grips may lead to increased control, while thinner grips may lead to an increase in feel.



How to Buy

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Wedges

Putters



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