

## #1 Way to Deal with Nerves in Golf

If you've golfed competitively you've no doubt felt nerves affect your game. When I say competitively I don't just mean competing on a professional or mini-tour. If you have a \$5 bet with a colleague or friend it's still competitive! Whether you're a 27 handicap or scratch you are likely to feel at least some nerves during your round.

For many people it doesn't even have to involve competition at all. Just **stepping to the first tee** can cause a serious case of nerves. Maybe it's when you must make a put to tie a hole or to win on the 18th green. If you're standing on the 17th hole in a match and you're 1 down then you have to deliver. Period. If you can't **channel your nerves** you had better hope that swing you've been grooving for the past 6 months holds up now!

Regardless of skill level and/or on course scenario there will be times when you'll require some way to calm your nerves so they don't adversely affect your stroke/swing.

Have you made any conscious attempts to **reduce your experience of nerves** in your game? What did you try? What have been your results? Did they work and if so was it immediate? Or did you, like most every golfer alive, simply fill your head full of self talk saying things like, "ok, calm down. Just breathe...there's nothing to be nervous about...hey, maybe *he'll miss his putt...yeah...miss-miss-miss!...*"

Does this sound familiar?! Have you noticed that this doesn't really do all that much to reduce your nervousness? Unless of course your playing partner *does* miss the putt!

Seriously though, you must have a means of noticing the onset of nerves and a method for not only calming them but **using them to your advantage**. How does that sound?

While I can't go into detail on how to transform nerves into actually playing your best golf under pressure I will provide a few excellent methods you can use right away. They will improve your performance.

Breath is a very powerful state enhancer. What I mean is that your breathing provides deep physiological links to your internal states. So when you're nervous the last thing you want to do is take short, shallow breaths. Quick breaths actually instruct the brain to respond in a "fight or flight" manner. The **brain is hardwired to respond** to fast breathing by being on the lookout for an emergency. Not the most effective place from which to make a smooth putting stroke on that 10 footer for par now is it?!

### Tip #1

1) While waiting for your turn to hit stand aside and follow this breathing pattern:

**Inhale** - 4 counts

**Hold** - 5 counts

**Exhale** - 6 counts

Long, deep, slow breaths. This process interrupts the breath influenced aspect of your state and directly **instructs the brain** to become still. Another adverse affect of nerves is a noticeable loss of feel in your hands. Sometimes you may even wonder if you're even holding the club!

### Tip #2

