



Pronghorn

ISSUE 3

LIFESTYLES OF CENTRAL OREGON

Pronghorn's Top 10

Outdoor adventures

Luxury Living

Like No Place Else

Seasonal Shopping

Pronghorn Style



The Off-Season Golf Experience | Holiday Entertaining | Hydrotherapy as Healing

THE HEART OF THE GAME

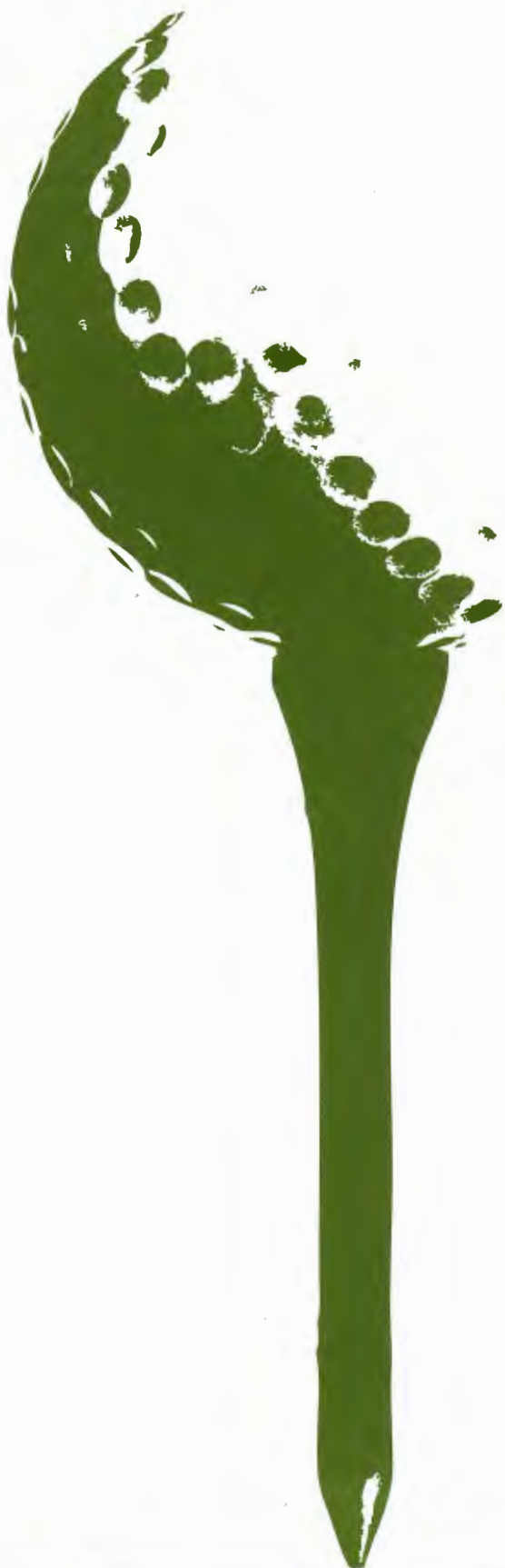
Improving Your Golf Swing in the Off-Season

BY KYLA MERWIN CHENEY

Let's admit it: it's more fun to play golf than it is to practice it—rolling greens, azure skies, emerald fairways, the camaraderie, and the thrill of the chase for par. There is simply nothing like it on Earth.

While we're discussing it, we might as well admit that the only way to experience the best the game has to offer, is to *practice* it—to hone your skills, do some body work and exercise the rough-and-tumble muscles of your mind.

THE DECISION



Now that the sanguine days of summer have ended, and short sleeves have surrendered to long johns, it's time to put your bag in the garage and go to the heart of the sport. So that next year, when spring blooms green and bright and the links call you out again, your game is ahead of itself—beyond where you left it when the days got short, dark and cold and you moved indoors for cozier pursuits.

Mike Lewis, Director of Instruction at the Jack Nicklaus Academy of Golf at Pronghorn, offers some advice on what you can do in the winter months so your game doesn't suffer one giant step backward when the snow flies. "The number one thing players should do," he says, "is to figure out who they are."

So, what are you good at? And what do you struggle with? Can you launch your drives like rocket ships but consistently shank your short game? Do you show great finesse on the fairway but die a slow, painful death in sand traps?

"Players can turn their weaknesses into strengths," Lewis insists with the confidence of a teacher who frequently witnesses the transformation of dedicated players. Or should we say, dedicated *practicers*?

"Winter is the best time to work on your swing, your body and your mind game," says Lewis. "The days are shorter and you're spending more time indoors." This is where the gym, your basement, and the Nicklaus Academy at Pronghorn can help, starting with an unabashed look into the heart of your game.



THE MAT SYSTEM, POWERED BY
TAYLORMADE, PROVIDES A 3-D LOOK
AT YOUR GOLF SWING, WHICH ENABLES
CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS TO PINPOINT
ISSUES AND PRESCRIBE SPECIFIC
GAME IMPROVEMENT TOOLS.

THE ASSESSMENT

Skills. The Nicklaus Academy helps golfers identify the best and—let's admit it—the worst of their physical skills: from driving to fairway woods, pitching to putting. Lewis carefully evaluates every nuance of a player's game and creates an individualized plan to capitalize on his or her strengths and improve weaknesses. "This is the whole key to getting better," Lewis says.

Body. Another sorry fact of life: your game is limited by the constraints of your body. As it once bestowed upon you all the privileges and joys of youth, your body will eventually, cruelly, betray you bit by bit, creating stiff joints, aching muscles and a complete refusal to rotate to the degree of your choosing. And your game suffers.

"Most swing issues are caused by physical limitations," Lewis explains. At the Academy, Lewis can identify your core issues—using state-of-art-art technology and a keen eye—and offer specific programs to help your strength, flexibility and technique.

Certified physical therapist Chris Cooper recently joined the Academy staff to offer hands-on treatments and ongoing exercise plans for players with physical limitations. Tennis elbow, sore back, creaky joints ... sound familiar? Every two weeks, Cooper meets with Pronghorn members to assess their physical issues, conduct mobility tests, perform treatments and offer ongoing exercise programs.

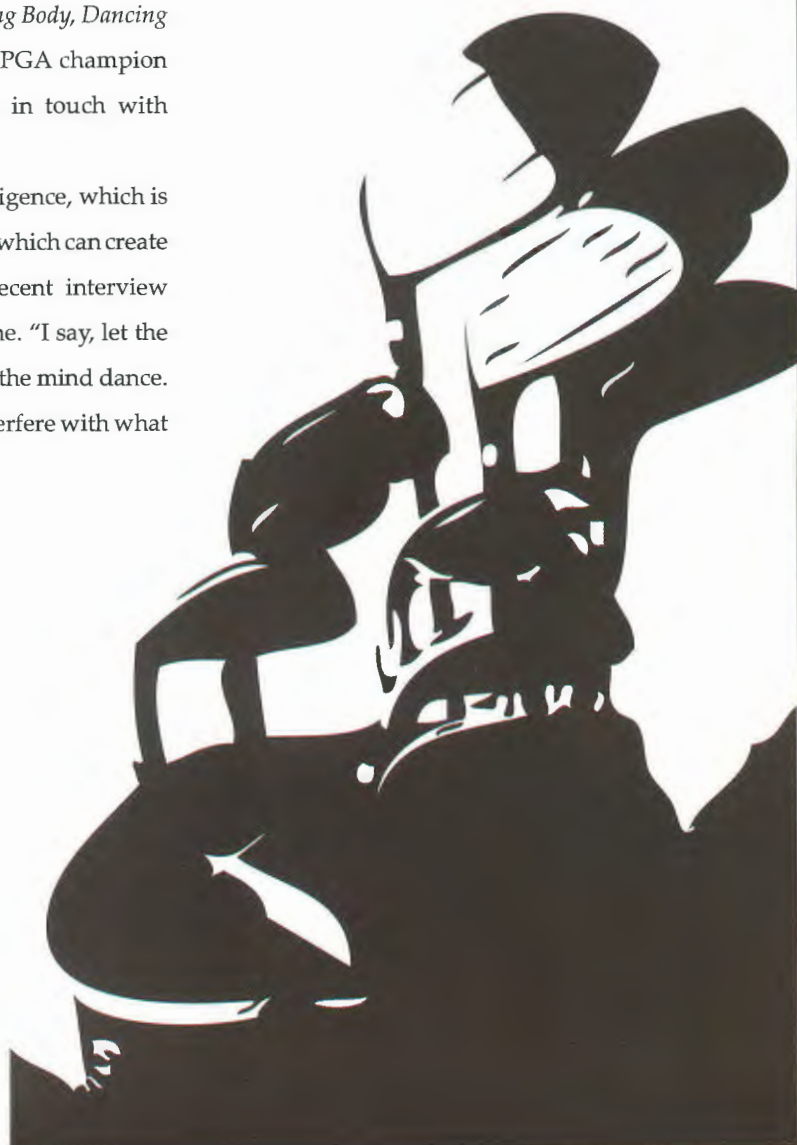
Mind. The mental game of golf needs to be practiced and honed as much as each pivot, putt and pitch. Brainpower can take your physical game to a whole new level. Don't let those wandering, unruly thoughts sabotage you at critical turns. But you already know this; if only you could control that unruly

mass of grey matter between your ears.

The off-season is a perfect time to start an *inner* practice, which will help your focus and finesse on the course. Meditation calms the chattering mind and yoga builds concentration and balance—components critical to your peak performance. Pronghorn instructor Susie Harris offers weekly classes in meditation and yoga on site and is available for private in-home instruction as well. Find your Zen, your zone, your Chi or whatever holy mindset gets the job done, *from the inside out*.

Internationally acclaimed sports psychologist Dr. Jerry Lynch, also on staff at the Nicklaus Academy, helps elite athletes and Olympians—and Pronghorn members—overcome fears, blocks and slumps so they can perform to their best potential. The principles in his book, *Thinking Body, Dancing Mind*, for example, helped LPGA champion Annika Sorenstam get back in touch with her golf game.

"The body has innate intelligence, which is interfered with by our minds, which can create conflict," said Lynch in a recent interview with PRONGHORN Magazine. "I say, let the body do the thinking, and let the mind dance. The dancing mind doesn't interfere with what the body already knows."





THE WORK

Once you have a plan for physical and technical improvement, it's time to hit the gym, or the basement.


At Home. Mirror work is a huge asset to your off-season routine. You can get started with mirror work at the Academy, where you can see all the weird things you do when you swing. And then fix them. Invest in a large wall mirror and go to it, with or without a club in your hand.

Conduct your inner practice at home, too, creating a space and a regular time for the sacred work of the mind. Do your physical therapy exercises and stretches in front of the TV or to music. One rule Lewis insists on: if you have children in the house, leave the clubs in the garage.

At the Gym. Guided by your physical

assessment, the trainers at the Academy can set you up on an indoor regime to improve your specific weaknesses during those dark months off the course. Some players need to work on strength, others on flexibility, still others on balance and movement.

Working with the experts at Monaco Body Works and Rebound Sports and Performance Lab, players can launch themselves out of the tee box when springtime hits and the clubs come out.

Though the Jack Nicklaus and Tom Fazio signature courses were only closed five days last winter, and the Academy is open seven days a week, 52 weeks a year (with the exception of Thanksgiving and Christmas), Lewis insists that ongoing maintenance is the key. In the final analysis, "Just put a club in your hand," he says. "Ten minutes a day, four days a week. Maintain the movement." 

GOLFERS OF ALL AGES BENEFIT FROM PERSONAL INSTRUCTION IN THE WINTER MONTHS, WHEN THE WEATHER DRIVES US ALL INDOORS AND ALSO DRIVES US A LITTLE BIT STIR-CRAZY. PICTURED HERE: ISAIAH EVANS, 7, GETS PUTTING TIPS FROM MIKE LEWIS, DIRECTOR OF GOLF INSTRUCTION AT THE NICKLAUS ACADEMY OF GOLF AT PRONGHORN.

