

Pace of Play

A good pace of play is an important element in having a good experience at the golf course. It's often a combination of little things not done that wind up contributing to slow play. Most experts say that a good pace of play not only increases the enjoyment of the game, it can actually improve one's game. Standing around on every shot allows the muscles to cool down or limbs to stiffen up. A brisk pace can keep a golfer loose and ready to play.

Pace of play can be boiled down to two simple phrases: be prepared and be ready to play. Remember pace of play isn't about rushing your shots; it's about being ready to take your shot when it's your turn, and behaving efficiently on the course.

Here are some tips for making sure your pace of play is as brisk as it should be.

1. Use only one practice swing, if any.
2. While walking or riding to your ball, use the travel time to begin thinking over your next shot – the yardage, which club you'll use, and so on. Begin preparing before you get to your ball.
3. If sharing a cart, don't drive to the first ball, wait for the player to hit, then head to the second ball. Drop the first player off at her ball, drive on ahead to the second ball. The first player should walk over to the cart as the second player is playing her shot.
4. Limit your search for lost balls. When a ball is lost, hit your shot first and then help look for the lost ball.
5. Each member of a foursome should proceed directly to her ball. The group should not travel as a pack, going to the first ball, then the next, and so on.
6. On the green, begin lining up your putt and reading the break as soon as you reach the green. When it's your turn to putt, be prepared to step right up and take the stroke. Continue putting until you hole out.
7. Leave your bags or carts to the side of the green and in the direction of the next tee, never in front of the green.
8. Write down your score when you reach the next tee...never by the green.
9. Use the eight stroke rule. If you have taken eight shots and you're not on the green, pick up your golf ball and place it on the front of the green. Always circle your score on the card if you've used the eight stroke rule.
10. Follow the pace of play calculator. One player in your group is the timer. If your group is out of place according to the calculator, you must pick up your golf ball and proceed to the next tee-box.