



**VISION54** 

# **Pace of Play Training**

Pia Nilsson & Lynn Marriott

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## Intention

Fine-tune your routines for better and more efficient performance.

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## Pace of Play Training



Golf is not a reactionary sport like basketball, football, tennis, or soccer. In golf, the ball is sitting there waiting for you to take action! Players have a tendency to take more and more time to prepare with the expansion of data options available before a shot. Also, very few players have ever had their routines timed or explored to determine what is optimal for their performance. It's like over-packing! Each item is very good and useful, but altogether, it's just too much. A carry-on would be much better.

In golf, you need to volitionally pull the trigger and execute. Standing too long over the ball makes it easy to get distracted under perceived pressure. It also makes it harder to be athletic and use your instinct.

A more efficient pre-shot routine will save you a lot of energy for the actual execution and for an entire round and a whole tournament.

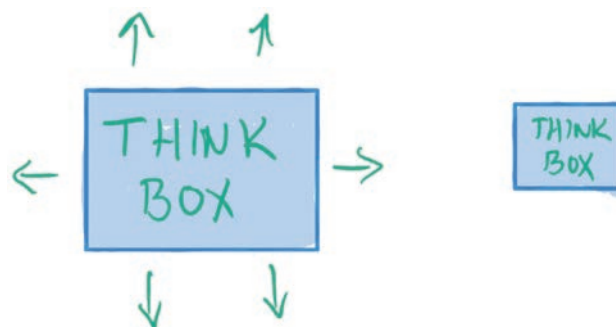
There are many things affecting pace of play. There are obvious things that improve pace of play – being ready to play when it's your turn (start preparing while others are hitting their shots), choosing where you leave your bag or cart by the green, deciding when it makes sense to write on the scorecard (when others are hitting).

For many, the missing piece is fine-tuning your own routine. How do you best prepare for a shot and execute to play great and be efficient.

**Think Box** – your preparation for a shot

**Play Box** – stepping into a shot and execution

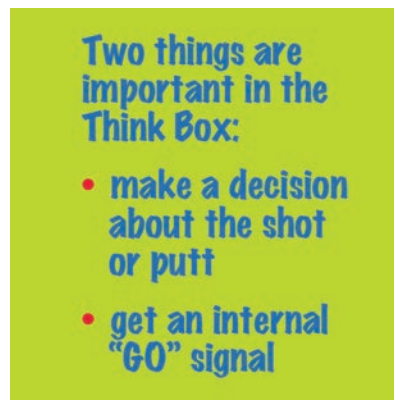
We want to highlight the **Think Box**, your preparation for a shot, and the **Play Box**, which is when you step into a shot and execute.



We have seen this **Think Box** space get larger and take more time for so many players. We are particularly concerned about this with the juniors we support that are learning the game and starting to compete more. The availability of

information to make a decision has expanded, players are obsessing and wanting to be sure not to miss anything – get the exact yardage in a myriad of different ways, checking wind, lie condition, slopes, making enough practice swings until it feels right, lining up the ball perfectly on the green, etc.... We feel it's getting totally out of hand and it makes players over-prepare and underperform, as well as making the game way too slow.

Reminder:



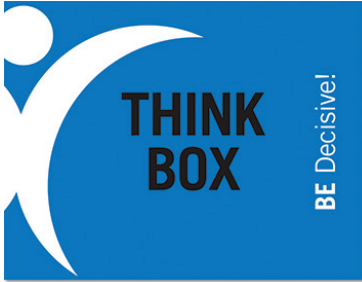
## Simplicity

A part of great golf is about energy efficiency. If you can spend less energy in preparing for each shot, it will be easier to play well for 18 holes or, for some of you, for several rounds during a week. In our opinion, nobody needs more than an average of 30 seconds for the **Think Box** and **Play Box**.



Be clear what facts are important and essential for your game. Remember that just because lots of information is available, doesn't mean it's good for your performance. Is it enough with one yardage to the middle of the green? Or do you want the yardage to the front of the green and to the flag? Are you good at reading the greens by just being present, walking up to the green and sensing the break without "reading it"? Or do you get your best read of the putt from behind the ball? If you like to make a practice swing, train yourself to do only one swing. And only in rare or certain circumstances will you add more rehearsal swings. It could be to get a feel for the size of the swing for a pitch shot or an uneven lie.

Pace of play is becoming an important piece of competitive golf. Do yourself a favor and create optimal **Think Box** and **Play Box** routines that stay at 30 seconds or less.



## Think Box

A good **Think Box** is about always stepping into the **Play Box** with *internal trust and decisiveness*. It's not about doing the exact same steps, pattern or external ritual each time. It's a structure with flexibility. Maybe you normally don't make a practice swing, but if it's cold out or you have been waiting a long time, it might be great with a practice swing.

Great decision-makers get some essential objective facts and then listen to their gut / instinct. Many players today overload on facts so they can't make up their minds and they ignore or can't sense what the gut is trying to communicate. You might have the same shot two days in a row, with the exact same facts of distance and wind. One day you feel sluggish and need an extra club, even though the objective facts say you should hit the same as the day before.



We see the process of making a decision as a bell curve – what are essential facts and at what point has the player dipped into too much gathering of available data and blunted their intuitive signals.

Great golf is a balance of science and art. The objective facts can never take into account the wind changing while you are swinging, how the ball will bounce, your energy level, tightness in your

body, trust and commitment to your decision, your level of adrenaline, etc...

Nobody we know wants to be slow ... they are unaware or undercoached how to do it differently.

## Practice Swings

Some of you like making a practice swing to feel something technical or to get a sense of the shot you want to create. Or for some, it might be to feel loose. Practice swings and practice strokes make sense when there is a useful intention for doing them and that it always makes you more confident. If you don't have a specific purpose or it might make you less confident, take them away! If your intention for the practice swing or stroke is to make it "perfect", then we think you ought to reconsider the intention. Playing on the golf course expecting "perfect" practice swings will make it very difficult to trust your shots. Some days you keep making those practice swings and it still doesn't feel "right".

If you have a tendency to make many practice swings, how can you be creative and accomplish your intention in one swing. An exception can be on shorter shots around the green where you want to get a feel for the grass, the lie or the size of the swing.



## Play Box

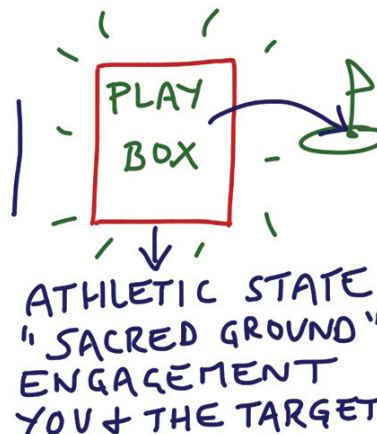
The **Play Box** is the moment of truth in golf! It's the time and space for setting up to a shot and making the swing or stroke. **The more athletic, engaged, and efficient you are, the easier it is to perform under perceived pressure.** You want to aim for a **Play Box** time of 4-9 seconds.

For players who stay over the ball 10-20 seconds, it's often for one of four reasons:

1. Having a long checklist to go through in your head.
2. Being very particular about your aim, alignment, and setup.
3. Having the need to keep looking up at the target many times.
4. Can't stop fiddling with your grip, feet...

If this is the case...

1. Retrain yourself to have a simple checklist for the **Think Box**, and then only a swing feel in the **Play Box**. Some of the checklist items might need more practice time at home or on the range, but not bring it into your on course performance.
2. You need more practice time at home or on the range, and keep it simple while you play.
3. Retrain yourself to have one or max two calm and present looks at the target, and as the eyes come back to the ball, go!
4. Retrain yourself at home or on the practice area, to be more ready with your good feel before stepping into the shot. Allow yourself max three seconds or change to another type of waggle / staying in motion before starting the swing.





## Coaches



As coaches of the game, we feel it's incumbent upon us to support players to understand how the pace of play is affecting your performance and enjoyment of the game. For the future of the game, we can shift the habits of golfers of all levels, to play more efficiently ... and better!

1. to time the players' routines on the golf course
2. to coach a good and efficient **Think Box** and **Play Box** routine for shots and putts

For us, it's part of the fundamentals of playing the game. Who are better than us coaches and teachers to take on this responsibility?

## Conclusion

For the future of your game and others' games, the more simple and efficient you keep your **Think Box** and **Play Box**, the easier it is to play well for a whole round, a whole tournament, a whole season. Go for simplicity!

It belongs to the fundamentals of golf to explore your best and most efficient routines.



***Slow-play... doctors?  
How 2 legends are curing players  
of the disease.***

by Nick Piastowski  
GOLF Magazine (February 2025)

>> <https://golf.com/news/slow-play-doctors-legends-curing-disease/?amp=1>




## Training Options to Fine-Tune Your Routines

Have your routines timed on the course. Check this on tee shots, shots into greens, around the green and putts. How much time do you spend in the **Think Box** and **Play Box**. Does anything change during tournament play, or under any perceived pressure.

We can see many players overdoing preparation when shots are more meaningful. A few will start rushing, but it often goes the other way, and not with good outcomes.

>> See **Pace of Play Scorecard** template on page 12 for your training.

Name: HAPPY GOLFER Date: FEB 18, 2020 

HOLE	Tee Shot	2nd	3rd	4th	Pitch	Chip	Bunker	Putt 1	Putt 2	Other
3	22	40						65	30	
4	20	32				15		24		
5	18	95	30					70	25	

Comments:  
 TEE SHOTS - SO READY WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN ++  
 #3 - DEBATING TO GO FOR IT ON 2ND SHOT... YOU COULD DO THAT WHILE THE OTHER PLAYERS WERE HITTING  
 FIRST PUTTS - WHAT IS MOST ESSENTIAL TO DO? LET'S EXPLORE HOW TO MAKE IT MORE TIME EFFICIENT.

Average Time: 37.4

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## Simplify Think Box – Pace of Play Mastery



The intention of Think Box is to make a decision that you can trust. The more time efficient you can be, the easier it will be to compete:

1. Save energy for ALL shots
2. No issues with pace of play.

► Write down all the steps that you want to do in your Think Box as you compete:

**Shots:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Putts:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Do your full Think Box routine and time how long it takes? Your goal is to be able to complete your Think Box and Play Box in 30 seconds without feeling stressed.

► If you can't do all your steps in the Think Box, which are your 2-3 most essential things to do? How many seconds is this simplified routine?

**Shots:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Putts:**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



## Pace of Play Explorations

### Nine Holes Being Intuitive

- ▶ Play nine holes not getting any facts like yardages, reading the greens, and not even practice swings. The only thing you can do in the Think Box is using your senses. See and feel what club and shot you want to hit. On the greens, be present and sense how the ball will be rolling to the hole.
- ▶ *What happens to your game doing this?* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Practice Swing Training

- ▶ If you like making practice swings, how can you accomplish the intention of the practice swing or stroke in one attempt?
  - **Rule #1:** What you focus on in a practice swing should be 100% guaranteed that it makes you more confident. If that is not the case, it's not a good on course practice swing intention.

### Practice Simplicity

- ▶ Play a few holes and make the fact-checking simple. For example, only get the yardage to the pin or middle of the green. Make a decision and then close your eyes for a few seconds, check in with your gut that you trust the decision. To be a good decision-maker you want the brain and the gut to come to an agreement. Learn to listen in. Putting and shots around the green involve more art than the full shots. If you get a “GO” signal how to hit a chip, pitch, bunker shot, or putt – **GO** – and don't ruin your instincts by doing all the fact-checking.

### Pace of Play Reflection

- ▶ Go out very early or very late during the day and play nine holes as fast as you can. Afterwards, reflect on what you discovered about your pace of play.



## Pace of Play Scorecard

This template goes back to the early 90's when Pia used it for the Swedish national team players. A few times a year, without the players knowing about it, Pia would check their pace of play in competition for at least three holes. Doing this periodically and sharing with the players ended up being a very useful coaching tool. Over time, each player learned how to manage their routines better. The goal is to play your best AND never have to be concerned with your pace of play.

You, as a coach, want to be discreet in checking your watch and writing down the numbers, or sometimes it's easier to just count "one thousand one, one thousand two...".

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



HOLE	Tee Shot	2nd	3rd	4th	Pitch	Chip	Bunker	Putt 1	Putt 2	Other

Comments:

Average Time:

## VISION54 Training Options



All **VISION54** training options are setup to support juniors, amateurs (both high and low hdcp), competitive players (professional and college), and coaches / teachers. Let us show you how to train the skills necessary to play better golf on the course.

▶ **Books, Action Guides, and Training Books**

Authored by VISION54 co-founders, Lynn Marriott & Pia Nilsson. All are available through online retailers in various formats.

>> Complete available list, details, and purchase options at: [VISION54.com/books](https://www.vision54.com/books)

▶ **In-Person Coaching**

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▶ **Self-Coaching**

Flexible, self-training options to learn and practice on your own schedule. Training options utilize digital instruction (PDF training guides, videos, and audios) and exercises you DO anywhere, at your own pace.

>> Complete details at: [VISION54.com/selfcoaching](https://www.vision54.com/selfcoaching)

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[VISION54.com](http://VISION54.com)

**Contact**  
[InTouch@VISION54.com](mailto:InTouch@VISION54.com)

