

# STUDIES FROM THE EUROPEAN TOUR

It would appear the golfers who are performing below plan are focusing on technique rather than on what they should be focusing on, namely, their mental game. This is one of the key findings from this research and science can now back up the futility of BELIEVING you will one day perfect technique. As the research below tells us, our brains simply do not allow us to 'code' the swing perfectly, so it will repeat time after time. We are all in a sense doomed to a level of inconsistent swings.

New research from Stanford University perfectly illustrates this: "The main reason you can't move the same way each and every time, such as swinging a golf club, is that your brain can't plan the swing the same way each time," says electrical engineering Assistant Professor Krishna Shenoy, whose research includes study of the neural basis of sensorimotor integration and movement control. He, postdoctoral researcher Mark Churchland and electrical engineering doctoral candidate and medical student, Afsheen Afshar authored the study.

It's as if each time the brain tries to solve the problem of planning how to move, it does it anew, Churchland says. Practice and training can help the brain solve the problem more capably, but people and other primates simply aren't wired for consistency like computers or machines. Instead, people seem to be improvisers by default.

## FLEXIBILITY BEATS CONSISTENCY

For athletes, the inability to replicate the perfect movement might seem to be a frustrating problem which needs to be solved. But, the researchers speculate that the brain has evolved its apparently "improvisational style " precisely because the vast majority of situations requiring significant movement are novel. Predators never get the chance to catch and kill prey in exactly the same fashion and in exactly the same conditions.

"The nervous system was not designed to do the same thing over and over again," Churchland says. "The nervous system was designed to be flexible. You typically find yourself doing things you've never done before." Despite this research though, many players, when performing poorly, attribute the result to technique and spend MORE time practicing. Yet, the survey results show that players who are 'on track' are actually practicing LESS!

**The pervasive belief is we can 'groove' our swing to the point it just repeats and repeats while science is telling us the brain will NEVER allow this to happen.**

If we accept the swing will ALWAYS be a somewhat variable form, day to day, then practice can take on a more constructive approach. Golf is a RANDOM game played in an ever changing and FLEXIBLE environment yet, most players spend HOURS on the range hitting ball after ball in a FIXED and CLOSED environment.

Perhaps more practice time should SIMULATE the REAL game's ever changing conditions.