

# TRAINING CAMPS

With so many swing aids out there claiming to improve your game, how do you know what's worth your time and money? Read on

The scene from "Tin Cup" where Kevin Costner has about 10 training devices wrapped around a body part or dangling from his head was a humorous sight. But the not-so-funny thing is that it represented only a teeny fraction of the devices made available to golfers over the years. Some work, some don't. Some are expensive, some are pocket change. Some are silly, some are serious business.

We're always looking for an edge on the course beyond equipment, which is where training aids come in, and since we live in a device-crazy time, using something that reportedly will give us more power, better timing or more accuracy sounds good. But before you resort to any of the bells and whistles out there, check out what some of the region's top teaching pros think might work best for you.

## ALIGN YOURSELF



The **Alignment Stick** can help you get more comfortable with your target line and clubface in addition to aligning your feet parallel to the target line. One fun way to use it is to put it through your belt loops and check your hip alignment and rotation during the swing. Another great drill is to stick it in the ground in front of you on your target line so you can see if you started the ball on the line or to the left or right. What's different about this training aid is you also can use it on the practice green. I use it in many of the same ways as I do with the full swing. One great drill is to use two to create a track to start your stroke and have the ball roll through it. This will help your setup and alignment feel more comfortable.

**Scott Heyn**  
PGA General Manager  
Black Gold Golf Club

## KEEP YOUR BALANCE



Maintaining good balance when you swing a club is necessary to produce a solid hit. During lessons I often see students lose their balance toward their toes on the backswing, which causes fat shots because the ball hits the heel of the clubface. My favorite training aid to help my students feel proper balance from setup to the top of the backswing are **Balance Discs**. The discs are filled with air so when you stand on them with a golf club in your hand you have to properly distribute your weight at setup and maintain it into your backswing. You'll fall off if you lean toward your toes or if you lift the club without turning your torso properly.

**Michelle Dubé**  
LPGA Master Teaching Professional  
Tijeras Creek Golf Club

## FINDING THE SWEET SPOT



One training aid that will improve your ball striking and help you shoot lower scores is called **The Little One**. It is the fastest way to find the sweet spot on the clubface. When you use this club, which is half the size of a normal iron, it is going to get you more focused on being efficient. It can teach you to hit the golf ball pure, right in front of the center of gravity. This will create golf shots that are going to have the most amount of backspin and accuracy. The Little One provides instant feedback, which will allow you to learn at a higher rate and speed, as well as help you improve at the only place in the golf swing that really matters: impact.

**Sean Foley**  
Professional Golf Coach

## MAKING AN IMPACT



My favorite training aid is the **Impact Ball**. I encourage my students to use an Impact Ball because it allows players to practice their swing without focusing on mechanics. Golfers can use it for every aspect of their game, including full swing, chipping, bunker shots and putting. A repeatable golf swing requires feel, and using the Impact Ball allows a player to ingrain proper positions by taking focus away from trying to hit at the golf ball and placing it squarely on the body and club working together through the golf ball. The Impact Ball also helps simplify swinging the golf club by creating a relationship between the body, the hands and wrists, and the club through the impact area.

**Kyle Oliver**  
Head Golf Professional  
Rancho San Marcos

## STRAIGHTEN UP



My favorite training aid is using **two clubs for alignment** purposes. Most golfers set up and aim their body lines (feet, knees, hips and shoulders) at the target or right of it. This results in an inconsistent shot pattern as the golfer usually has to swing over the top to get the club in front of them and down the target line at impact. To be fundamentally sound you should aim your body lines left of your target (for righties) about 10 percent of the shot's total distance. The two clubs should be put on the ground with the one farthest from you aimed at the target and the other parallel to it. Put your feet behind the closest club, aim your body lines parallel to it and use the top club as a reference for your clubface (perpendicular) and swing path (down the line).

**Eric Lohman**  
PGA General Manager  
Monarch Beach Golf Links

## STRING IT OUT



My favorite training aid is a string suspended over the ball when putting. Dave Pelz has one called the **Aim Line**. Find a straight putt and put one stake in the ground 18 inches behind the hole and the other about 15 feet in front of it. Attach the string and place your ball under the line about 12 feet from the hole. Position your eyes over the string so it looks to be cutting the ball in half. If you have a line built into your putter that is centered with the sweet spot then the string should look like it is filling in the line on the putter. If you have no line on the putter then the top edge of the face should be at a 90-degree angle to the string. You now have your putter square to the hole and your eyes directly over the ball.

**Scott Wadkins**  
PGA Professional  
ASU's Karsten Golf Course

## TRAINING AIDS

By Alex Smolinski

### TourAngle144

**Price:** \$29.95  
**Phone:** (800) 737-0416  
**Website:** [tourangle144.com](http://tourangle144.com)



Based on research acquired from an independent study conducted among golfers from multiple major tours, the TourAngle144 is a swing training aid focused on maintaining a 144-degree angle from the forearm to the shaft of the club throughout the swing to decrease shot inconsistencies and curb a player's tendencies to slice the ball. The TourAngle144, available in both right-handed and left-handed models, helps promote perfect posture, great takeaway and a well-timed and powerful release. The simple, lightweight device comes with a carry pouch, "The Basics & More" DVD featuring acclaimed instructor Steve Bosdosh, a sample pack of "4 Yards More" tees and free shipping.

### The SwingWing

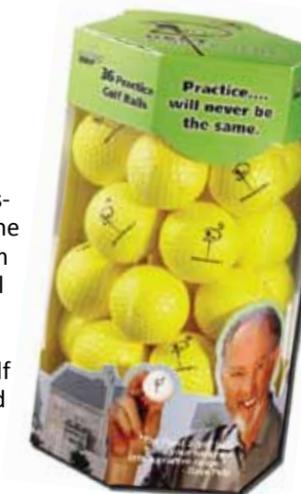
**Price:** \$29.95  
**Phone:** (248) 685-7515  
**Website:** [swingwinggolf.com](http://swingwinggolf.com)



The SwingWing is an inflatable training device that slides onto the shaft of the club and utilizes wind-resistance to increase speed and power in a golfer's swing. Just swinging the club 10-20 times prior to playing a round with the SwingWing attached can have dramatic effects on distance, tempo and sequencing. Golfers also can use the SwingWing to help align shots, maintain stability in the wrists during chips and putts and improve arm position and proper stance. The soft, vinyl practice aid is lightweight and portable, and is easily deflated and stored.

### almostGOLF ball

**Price:** \$10.95 (10-Ball Pack)  
**Phone:** (800) 998-1077  
**Website:** [almostgolf.com](http://almostgolf.com)



The almostGOLF ball hits like a real ball, but only travels a third of the distance, making it safe for practice in the back yard, park or beach. A 14.5-gram cross-linked foam core allows the ball to draw, spin and fade naturally by maintaining the same initial velocity, launch angle and spin as a normal golf ball, but then causes it to lose speed and eventually fall to the ground. The almostGOLF ball provides a safe, effective and convenient practice aid that can benefit golfers of all skill levels.