

Are You Facing a Golf Swing Problem or a Mental Issue?

by Dori O'Rourke, LPGA

If you want to improve your golf game in the fastest, easiest way, one of the most important things you need to learn is the difference between a swing issue and a mental issue.

Once you know the difference, you'll be able to work directly at the root of a problem and get the results you want most effectively. If you don't know the difference, you'll end up wasting a lot of time working on the wrong things and never get the results you want.

In over 20 years as a golf instructor, I can't remember anyone ever thinking they were dealing with a mental issue when it was really a swing issue. However, I've known thousands of golfers to think they're dealing with a swing problem when they're really facing a mental issue.

The reason why most golfers mistake mental issues for swing issues is simple. Mental issues can and do cause changes to your golf swing. For example, if you set up to a golf shot and your mind is filled with doubt, fear, or a list of swing thoughts, you have very little chance of your best swing showing up.

What you must understand is this. If a mental issue is causing a swing problem, then working on your golf swing isn't the solution. Your less-than-ideal swing is merely a "symptom" of the mental issue.

To help illustrate this point, here is an excerpt from page 63 of my book, *Custom-Fit YOUR Golf Swing*:

Are Your Swing Mechanics Really the Problem?

Imagine walking along a balance beam that is resting flat on the ground. Then, imagine walking along that balance beam again – only this time it's place between the rooftops of two, 10-story buildings. What changes might you experience?

You walked perfectly fine when the balance beam was on the ground. However, now that it's raised 10 stories into the air, your walking is much different. Instead of gliding confidently and effortlessly across the beam, now you are taking painfully slow, tentative, jerky steps.

Here's the big question: If I'm your balance beam coach and my job is to improve the way you walk on the balance beam when it's between the two rooftops, what should I focus on during your practice time? Should I spend time trying to change the way you walk, or should I focus on something else?



If we spend time trying to change your walking habit, you won't see improvement because that's not the real problem. The problem is what changed in your mind when the balance beam was placed in the air.

Similarly, you shouldn't spend time trying to change your swing just because it doesn't show up on the golf course if it's perfectly fine in a practice swing or on the range!

If your golf swing is better on the driving range than it is on the golf course. If your practice swing is better than the swing you make with the ball in front of you. If you're ever playing golf and you feel like you lose your swing. These are all signs of a mental issue and NOT a swing problem.

An easy rule of thumb is this: If you have your golf swing in one place and not in another, then your golf swing isn't the problem. What you're facing is a mental issue that is preventing your golf swing from showing up at its best. The solution for that is a change to your mental state.

Luckily, solving a mental issue is just as simple as solving a swing issue once you understand what needs to happen. That's exactly what I'll be covering in my next article. In the meantime, if you have any questions, feel free to send them to CoachDori@CoachDoriGolf.com.



LPGA Teaching Professional, Dori O'Rourke is a popular writer, teacher, and speaker. Known to many as *Coach Dori*, her talks and writings have inspired and entertained thousands of men and women golfers coast to coast for over 20 years.

Her latest book, *Custom-Fit YOUR Golf Swing*, reveals the evolutionary swing program that is transforming golf instruction worldwide.