



Get Into GOLF

Interested in golf, but have more questions than answers?
We're here to help!



NCGA

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA GOLF ASSOCIATION



ENJOY GOLF MORE

Get Into Golf

Whether you are just thinking about learning how to golf or getting back into the game, it can feel like there are some roadblocks. We're not going to lie, it can be challenging. That is why we want to help you break down those barriers. There's a lot to enjoy once you do!

Start Your Golf Journey with Confidence

Embracing a new sport like golf can be exciting but daunting. At the NCGA, we're passionate about providing you with the resources you need to overcome common roadblocks and start enjoying the game of golf.



Demystifying Golf

We're committed to breaking down barriers and making the game more inviting for everyone. Our resources can guide you through golf lingo and give you an overview of what to anticipate when you take that first swing.

[READ MORE](#)



Honing Your Skills

It's true that golf takes practice, but everyone has to start somewhere! We offer instructional articles and videos, and golf lessons at our home courses to help you build your skills over time.

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Making Golf Affordable

From equipment and apparel to the cost of playing rounds, there are a lot of expenses to consider in golf. We're here to help with budget-friendly tips, short course recommendations, and exclusive discounts for NCGA members.

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Finding Your Golf Community

With diverse membership options including eClubs, Associate Clubs, and Regular Clubs, the NCGA empowers individuals to create and join thriving golf communities and build lasting friendships that make the game even more enjoyable.

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Demystifying Golf

I don't know the golf lingo.

Discover the colorful world of golf terminology with our cheat sheet! From birdies to bogeys, learn the language of the game and impress your fellow golf enthusiasts.



Scan or click the QR code for golf terminology!



Scan or click the QR code to see the 5 step guide!

I don't know what to expect for my first round of golf.

Golf is hard, we know. It's even harder to get into if you don't know some of those unspoken rules and traditions that govern a round of golf. We all start somewhere, why not here with this list of more in-depth practical advice that goes beyond just what to wear on the course? (but FYI, it's best to call the course ahead of time if you have questions on attire)

Prepare to delve into some unexpected questions (complete with answers!) that will guide you through your first golfing journey, so you can walk the golf walk with confidence and avoid any rookie mistakes along the way!

I don't know the Rules of Golf

The game of golf comes with a handbook of rules that can be intimidating for a beginning golfer. When you're ready to compete in a tournament, you will need to know most of them. But if you're just out on the course learning how to enjoy the game and improve your skills, here are some basics to know about. Other golfers will expect you to conduct yourself with awareness of these principles!



Scan or click the QR code to see the 5 rules of golf!

I don't know the basics of golf etiquette.

Master the unwritten (and written!) rules on the course with our comprehensive guide to golf etiquette. As a beginner, understanding and following proper golf etiquette is essential for a smooth and enjoyable game.



Scan or click the QR code to see the Etiquette Guide!



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!

I don't know what tees to play from.

Don't feel pressured to play from the same tees as your more seasoned golfing partners.

Select your best tees based on how far you hit your 7-iron. This ensures you're playing the course as designed/intended and so that you can enjoy your round sans any frustrations.

TL;DR? See the table below for a rough recommendation or use USGA's Best Course Length Calculator!

7-IRON DISTANCE	BEST COURSE LENGTH
80 yards or less	3,500 - 3,700
95	4,100 - 4,300
110	4,800 - 5,000
125	5,400 - 5,600
140	5,900 - 6,100
155	6,400 - 6,600
170 or more	6,700 - 6,900

For example: according to the above table, if you hit your 7-iron 95 yards, it's recommended that you play the Green tees at Poppy Hills Golf Course since the total course length is 4,173 yards.

Honing Your Skills

What the heck is a golf handicap?

Not all golfers are created equal, but with the golf handicap system, they can all compete with one another on an equal basis. For example, Tom's average score is 80 and Meaghan's average score is 95. With the handicap system, Tom 'gives' Meaghan a calculated number of strokes to level the playing field such that either of them has the same chance to win.

To put it simply, handicaps are equalizers.

Check out our Handicap 101 page for more answers to your Handicap questions like:

- What is course rating and slope on the scorecard?
- Why are holes ranked 1-18 on a scorecard?
- What is a Net Score?
- ...and more!

Additionally, USGA has developed an extensive 2024 Handicap Explainer Video Series, that answers many complex golf handicapping topics such as what a Course Handicap is, what Max Score is, and so much more. Don't miss these videos, they're worth the binge watch!



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!



Why do I need a golf handicap?

There are several good reasons to establish your Handicap Index. A Handicap Index makes it possible for fair competition between players of different abilities, whether it's in competitive events, a friendly wager between friends, or golf games with prizes on the line.

Learn more on why you need a golf handicap and all the benefits that come with establishing one.

1. To be ready for golf outing invitations
2. To be ready for friendly bets
3. To get in the winner's circle
4. To track your golf game progress
5. To make good choices
6. To keep your frustration in check



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!



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How do I get a golf Handicap Index (how to get a GHIN number)?

The USGA collaborates with 57 Allied Golf Associations (AGA's- each state has one or more) which are the authorized organizations for issuing and maintaining official World Handicap Systems Handicaps. In Northern California, this is us! The Northern California Golf Association.

Here are the steps to getting your Handicap Index:

- **Step 1:** Become A Member (if you're in Northern California!) To get a handicap, you must join a club. There are 3 main types of clubs – regular, associate and eClub. Choose the one that's right for you and your game.
- **Step 2:** Get your GHIN Number.
- **Step 3:** Post a minimum of 54 holes from courses with a valid Course Rating™ and Slope Rating™ (can be a mix of 18-hole scores and 9-hole scores).
- **Step 4:** Your Handicap Index will be calculated the very next day!

After that, the system will update on a daily basis, which you can check after posting, but you will also receive updates via email on the 1st and 15th of every month.

Until your Handicap Index is calculated, you will see it listed as 'NH' which stands for No Handicap.



What is Pace of Play?

Pace of Play is a set of rules and guidelines that encourage players to play at a reasonable speed so that everyone can enjoy their round.

Beginners should keep this general rule in mind: golf is supposed to be a 4-4.5 hour game. Officially speaking, a player is permitted a maximum of 40 seconds to play a stroke, while this is the hard and fast rule in tournament play, it's more of a guideline in casual play. The following are a few short reminders to help you RESPECT pace of play.

continued on the next page...



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!

R – Ready Golf always.

Ready golf is the standard. Play this way whenever possible. Lost a ball? Call it after 3 minutes; drop a new one and carry on. Don't dwell on lost balls or missed shots to keep the game flowing smoothly.

E – Everyone on the same page.

Each group should do its best to keep up with the group in front of them. Work together to make up time when you fall behind. Tips: within your playing group agree to pick up after your max score and generously concede short putts if you can.

S- Slow group?

Slowing down the group behind you? Let them play through if possible. Your position on the course should always be directly behind the group in front of you, rather than holding up the group behind you. By allowing faster groups to pass, you not only show respect for their time but also help maintain a positive atmosphere on the course.

P – Pick the right tees.

Be sure to pick the right tees for your game in order to have the best experience. Hit it like Rory? Cool, then some of the back tees may be for you. Haven't been out for a while or have a mid-range Handicap Index? Try the mid-range tees. Need more help deciding, check out USGA's 7-iron solution to determine which tees to play based on how far you hit your 7-iron.

E – Efficiency for enjoyment.

Enjoy yourself but also try to be more efficient. Be ready when it's your turn by planning your shot ahead of time. Cut down on practice swings for sure. Friendly mulligan - ok, but just one, please. Grab a few extra clubs if you're not sure about the distance. Size up your putt while others are putting in order to save time.

C – Camaraderie is key!

Camaraderie is key, having fun with buddies and family members is what it is all about. Just be aware not to get side-tracked on conversations and fall behind.

T – Take care of the course.

Be sure to take care of the course by replacing divots, fixing ball marks, properly raking the bunkers - leave it as you would like to have it left for you! This does take a few minutes, but is part of the respect for the game.



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!

How do I improve my golf skills?

It's hard to play golf, we get it. Check out these instructional articles to help with your swing progress.

- Hitting on uneven lies
- Short-game drills to improve your greenside shots
- Check out our free Online Skills Clinic- it's a series of 4 emails with helpful videos on Short Game, Bunkers, Driving, & Putting.

How to find golf lessons.

Don't forget our Member Courses professional instructors will design custom lessons to help you break bad habits, meet your goals, and head out onto the course with confidence. Let's turn those bogeys into pars!



Scan or click the QR code above for Poppy Hills!



Scan or click the QR code above for Poppy Ridge!



Making Golf Affordable

How do I save money when starting my golf journey?

Start your golf journey without breaking the bank. Learn 7 wallet-friendly ways to get started, from building a starter set to finding golf discounts!

1. Build Your Starter Set
2. Search for Discounts on Golf
3. Practice Your Swing at Home before hitting the Driving Range
4. Then add in a Practice Session at the Driving Range
5. Explore Deals and Opportunities at Local Golf Facilities
6. Start off at Short Courses
7. Take Advantage of Twilight Golf



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!



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I'm looking for budget friendly golf rounds.

Need a budget friendly round to dip your toes into golf? As a beginner, you don't need to play on a full-size golf course right away. Consider taking advantage of short courses, which are smaller, more beginner-friendly as they are less intimidating for new golfers. These courses typically have shorter holes with the majority of them being either Par-3's or Par-4's (or around Par-27 for nine-holes, meaning less distance) and typically cost less than a Par-36, longer distance 9-hole courses.

Check out our newly rated short courses to find a local par-3 course near you.

Also don't forget check out Poppy Ridge's new Composite 9 course! NCGA members get preferred rates everyday!

Does NCGA have any golf discounts?

So glad you asked! As a NCGA member, don't forget to take advantage of your NCGA Benefits that includes Exclusive Discounts.

We give our members access to exclusive savings- some discounts are available every day, while others are special promotions on golf course rounds, stay and play opportunities, golf services, and more.

Among the highest-rated are member rates at Poppy Hills and Poppy Ridge. Not a Member? Here's how to Become A Member!



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!

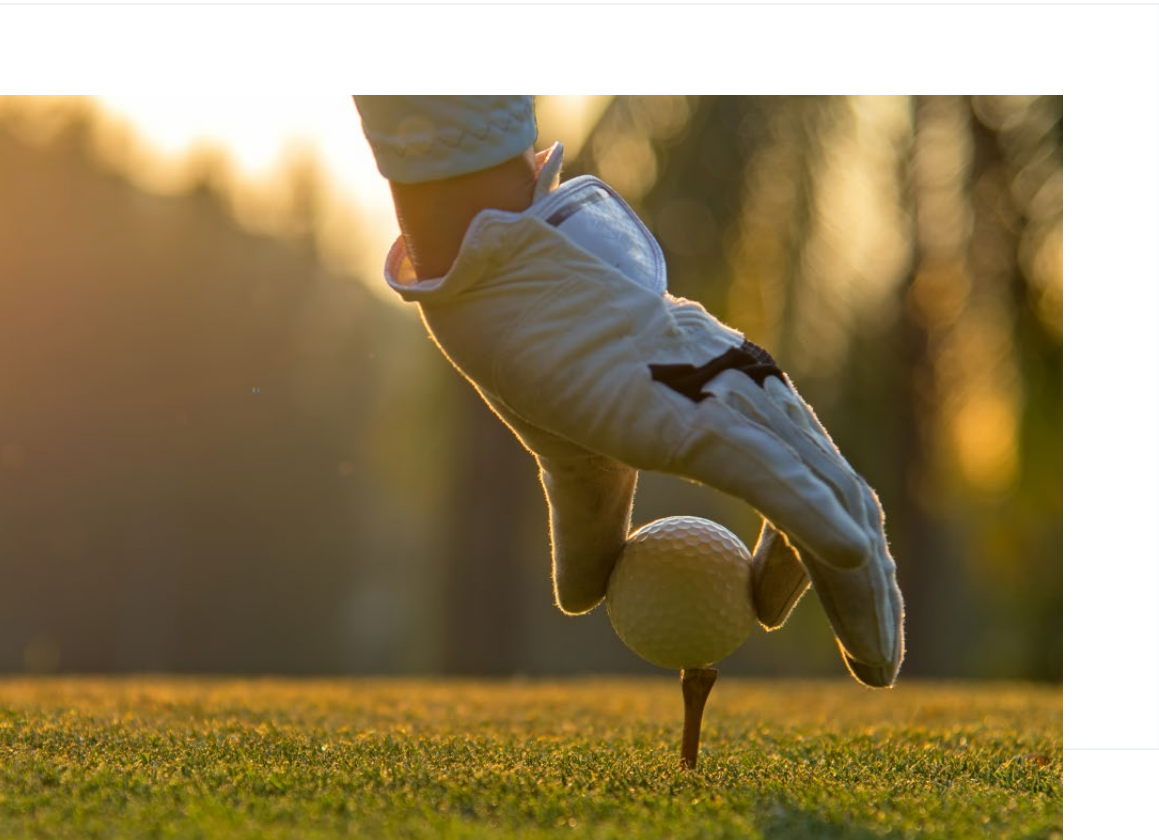


Scan QR code above for a free online skills clinic

I'm looking for free golf resources.

Check out our free Online Skills Clinic- it's a series of 4 weekly emails with helpful videos on Short Game, Bunkers, Driving, & Putting. No cost to you!

FREE ONLINE SKILLS CLINIC



Finding Your Golf Community

What is the NCGA?

The Northern California Golf Association supports and promotes amateur golf. The NCGA's mission is to inspire all to enjoy the benefits of golf by providing innovative programs and services.

The NCGA is one of many 'Allied Golf Associations' in the United States. The USGA is the governing body of golf in the U.S., but relies on the states to take care of golf business in their regions. California has two such golf associations: the NCGA and the SCGA (Southern California Golf Association).

A golf association is composed of clubs. To become a member, a golfer must join a private, public, or associate club, or an online eClub. The NCGA has over 185,000 members across over 1,300 clubs.

NCGA 101



Scan the QR code above to learn more!



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!

What is an eClub Membership?

An eClub Membership is one of the 3 types of memberships that are offered by the NCGA and makes it easy to sign up online and start taking advantage of member benefits.

A great part of a NCGA eClub membership is the ability to sign up and start posting scores and making use of benefits within minutes! These memberships are online-based memberships designated by 8 different regions through Northern California.

What is an Associate Club Membership?

An Associate Club Membership is one of the 3 types of memberships that are offered by the NCGA.

Associate Clubs are usually a group of golfers that are drawn together by a common interest or shared bond without being linked to a golf course.

Associate Clubs can consist of co-workers, friend groups, or even a handful of avid golfers in a particular area that just want to play the game with new people. These types of clubs are organized primarily to enjoy the game of golf and provide an opportunity to join and enjoy the services provided by the NCGA.

Each type of Associate Club operates differently in terms of benefits and pricing and membership dues are paid directly to the club. View our Partial List of Associate Clubs that are currently seeking new members to find a club that fits your needs.



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!



Scan or click the QR code above to see more!

What is a Regular Club membership?

A Regular Club Membership is one of the 3 types of memberships that are offered by the NCGA.

A Regular Club membership is based out of a green grass golf course facility, whether that be a public or private golf course.

The memberships offered at Regular Clubs are often what comes to mind when one thinks about becoming a member of a "golf club".

Specific benefits as well as membership dues vary depending on which of the 400+ clubs you decide to join. As with the other two club types, there are specific NCGA tournaments that you can participate in while being a member of a regular club.