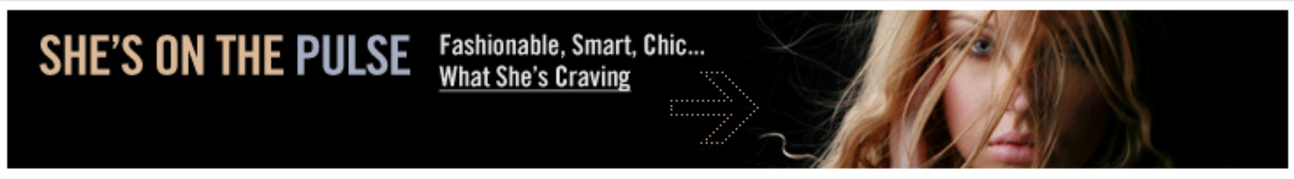

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Kick the Jitters: Get Your Golf Game Up to Par Using Hypnotherapy

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May 27, 2011 Nicole Courides

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golf club against ball - *kulicki on Flickr*

Golf season is here and the PGA Tour is in full swing. Follow the tips used by the professionals to improve your game on the green.

Many professional athletes rely on mental focalization to help gain concentration, ease nerves, defeat pressure and even pain game after game. Whether teeing up for recreational enjoyment or a professional tournament, each golfer on the green is competing against the next player, and at times, himself.

All competitors share the same pressure but each competitor absorbs the pressure individually – rather than as a team. The golfer must rely on personal, mental endurance. "Golf is specifically an individual situation," explains Steven M. Rosenberg, Ph. D.

Dr. Rosenberg has helped thousands of people kick smoking as well as boost self-esteem and motivation. The 1994 Cambridge's Man of the Year, Hypnosis Hall of Fame inductee and author *of "I Hope the Hell I Win! Turning Hope into Reality..."* is no stranger to working with high-profile athletes either; Rosenberg served as the official psychotherapist for the Philadelphia Flyers.

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Obstacles on the Green

Crowds of spectators follow the game from hole-to-hole, the competitors watch each opponent's stroke, and unlike on a soccer field where there are up to twenty-two players to watch, on a golf green one player swings at a time. Another distraction is the time spent between holes waiting, watching, and traveling across the course.

The power of Visualization

"Visualization is the key to performing well and enjoying what you are doing," says Rosenberg. "It is your mental rehearsal," he adds. When visualizing the perfect swing, your muscles and nerves contract and react even though your body remains still. Then, when it's time for the real swing your muscles are trained and ready to perform.

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Conquer Pain

By mentally relaxing specific muscle groups, the athlete's body becomes loose, the mind calm and able to focus on the game rather than anxious nerves. Focalization can even defeat pain and discomfort. "For example, if experiencing back pain, focus warmth on that area –such as direct sunlight – to create better circulation. The imagined warmth will sooth, comfort, and relax the muscles," advises Rosenberg.

The One-Minute Mental Tune Up

A breathing technique encouraged by Rosenberg can be used prior to any big game or any everyday challenge. Take a deep breath through the nostrils and fill the lungs with air, to capacity. Exhale through the mouth while slowly counting backwards from five to one. Repeat three times. Return to normal breathing and press your left thumb against the left index finger while visualizing the words, *'positively relaxed and in the moment.'* "You've oxygenated your brain. You're now calm, alert, and able to really perform well," says Rosenberg.

About Dr. Steven M. Rosenberg:

*Rosenberg received his PhD in Counseling Psychology from Southwest University in 1982. Two years later, Rosenberg became the first psychotherapist to be hired by a professional sports team, the Philadelphia Flyers. He has been featured in a number of local and national media outlets including Best Life Magazine, Best of Philly 2010, GQ, Philly Fit Magazine, Fox 29, NBC 10, and CBS networks. Dr. Rosenberg has released a number of audiotapes ranging in subject from smoking to self-esteem which are available on his website, **www.quititnow.com**.*

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