



# Better Dentistry Through Golf

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Has a patient ever asked you why dentists like golf so much? Did you know there is more to the connection between golf and dentistry than just an old stereotype?

I recently slipped a golf question into Dentaltown.com's monthly online poll because I was curious to know if I was playing as much golf as my colleagues. I was shocked to discover only 18 percent of respondents play golf more than 15 times per year. I thought that number would be higher. Another 34 percent surveyed indicated they play less than 15 times per year

for a total of 52 percent who play golf. I thought it would be helpful to compare dentists to the general population. The best statistic I found was in the neighborhood of nine percent (which means there are 28.6 million golfers over the age of six, according to a National Golf Foundation report published in 2009). Ask a patient why there is such a high percentage of dentists who play golf, they might say, "Because they are rich and work four days a week." I would suggest that the relationship between golf and dentistry is much stronger than that.

## GOLF

- Golf is an adjunct to many business meetings because it will reveal more about the people you are with than a business lunch.
- Golf is filled with highs and lows; you can be playing well and then lose your composure after you hit an errant shot. Now you must figure out a way to get back on course.
- Golf will test your patience.
- Golf is never the same game twice, even when you play on the same course.
- Putting requires a player to read the contours of the green and make a decision about the best path and speed for his putt.
- Golf is a game you can play with others, but the end result is yours alone (your score).
- Read a golf magazine and you will find endless articles about improving your game and the latest equipment.
- A small number of golfers are quick to purchase the latest driver or newest game-enhancing ball.
- Golfers buy new equipment to hit the ball straighter, farther or improve accuracy.
- No matter how good you are at golf, you want to get better.
- The satisfaction from sinking a long putt, hitting a great drive or scoring a birdie brings you back for more.

## DENTISTRY

- Put someone in a dental chair and you will learn things about him that his friends don't know.
- Some procedures are completed without complication, but others present surprises when your patient is "feeling it," your proximal contact is light, a file is separated, a root tip breaks off, an impression has a bubble... figure out a solution and get your case back on track.
- Patients will test your patience.
- Every day in your dental practice is different, even when you see the same patients from one day to another.
- Dentistry requires that a dentist can mimic the existing contours of an anterior tooth when shaping a composite filling on the adjacent tooth.
- There are many people in your office who help you do dentistry, but you are ultimately responsible for the end results.
- Read a dental magazine and you will find endless articles about improving your practice and the latest equipment to assist your efforts.
- A small number of dentists will be the first on their block to own the latest piece of equipment or newest material.
- Dentists buy new equipment and materials to provide faster, better or more profitable dentistry.
- No matter how long you've been a dentist, you can always get better.
- Cementing a crown without adjustments, finishing an extensive treatment plan or receiving a letter from your patient; these are moments that make it possible to come back another day.

## Golf Trivia

The golf tee was invented by a dentist. Dr. George Franklin Grant received a patent for "an improved golf tee" in 1899. There were other methods for teeing up a ball prior to his patent, but Dr. Grant has been credited as the inventor of the modern, wooden, peg golf tee by the United States Golf Association.

The conclusion is simple, play more golf and your dentistry will improve. Please post this article on your refrigerator when you are out at the golf course so your family will know why you went golfing. If you have a question, or just want to go out for a round of golf, you can reach me by e-mail: [tom@farranmedia.com](mailto:tom@farranmedia.com) ■