

MYTHS OF GOLF

MYTH 1: GOLF TAKES ALL DAY TO PLAY

While a full round of golf takes between four and five hours (preferably closer to four hours), there are quicker ways to play the game that fit in with busy lifestyles. Nine holes of golf should take just two hours and now count towards your handicap, while mashie courses or the driving range offer shorter alternatives to a full round.

MYTH 2: GOLF IS AN EXPENSIVE GAME

For sure, the top end of the game is very expensive, but golf does not have to be massively costly. Like any other sport, you can spend as little or as much as you want, as there are membership options, equipment, and clothing to suit all budgets.

Many clubs have cheaper membership categories that give you access to the course at off-peak times, and you can pick up a starter set of clubs for around R2 500. Second-hand sets are even cheaper and often offer better value.

MYTH 3: GOLF IS A STUFFY GAME

While golf still has many traditions it adheres to, there is no doubt that the game is changing. There is a new wave of fans, formats, players and locations, with younger golfers embracing a funky new side to the sport, especially when it comes to dress style.

Most modern golf clubs are vibrant and welcoming, with a range of membership options to cater for all lifestyles.

MYTH 4: GOLF IS TOO HARD

Like most sports, golf can be challenging for the beginner, but it is one of the few sports that you don't have to be brilliant at to enjoy – or be competitive. The handicap system allows golfers of all abilities to compete fairly and with some practice (and a few lessons) most novices improve rapidly.

Beginners can learn to play the game at starter courses (mashie courses) or the driving range before graduating to full 18-hole facilities.

MYTH 5: GOLF IS A GAME FOR OLD MEN

Not at all true – it is a game for everyone.

Golf's unique handicap system allows people of different ages, genders, races and physical abilities or disabilities to play and compete against each other on equal footing.

These days one it is normal to find a wide diversity of players on the tee box or in the clubhouse.

MYTH 6: GOLF DOESN'T KEEP YOU FIT

Most players will walk between six and seven kilometres in every round of golf, burning calories with each stride and a few more with every swing of the club. All this exercise helps to lower cholesterol and blood pressure, while the game also helps to keep your mind active.

MYTH 7: YOU NEED TO BE A MEMBER OF A GOLF CLUB

Being a golf club member has many benefits, such as an official handicap, cheaper greenfees and the chance to play in competitions and events, but it is not essential – in fact, it is estimated that over 60% of golfers in South Africa are not affiliated to any golf club.

