

A lot of us when playing golf sometimes think we need a doctor to help us. Well, help may be at hand...

# The Swing Doctor

Dr Mark Vaughan can truthfully call himself the Swing Doctor.

His studio has the latest technology to help give golfers that extra edge, whether it be elite golfers or those with a high handicap.

"I complement what the pros do," said Mark. "They teach the technique...what I do is ensure you have the best equipment to give you the best chance to make the best swing every time. Once you have the equipment, it's then purely down to technique to hit a good shot. That's down to you and the pro."

Mark's high-tech studio is full of state-of-the-art machinery. It allows him to measure ball speed, launch angles, swing plane, impact...all the elements that go towards building the right clubs for the individual.

He uses the Trackman system, which readers may have seen at the Open Championship or at tour events. Mark is one of the first in the world to have this system available to the club golfer.

Fitting sessions follow a set format.

1. Welcome and player interview
2. Club analysis
3. Swing plane, impact, and ballflight analysis
4. Shaft evaluation and performance.

Once you've hit the ball into his golf net, the graphics on his plasma screen show the flight of the ball and including distance, spin, and whether it's a hook, a slice, or straight.

His tailor-made fitting service can also check whether the lofts and lies of your own clubs are correct. In the mass-produced world of golf clubs, all five-irons may be made in one batch...but the six-irons could be in a different batch. Put two clubs in a set from different batches...and you could end up with clubs that vary by as much as 20 per cent.

"It's always a good idea to get the lies and lofts checked, even with a new set.

"One of the problems with mass-produced clubs is that sometimes the lofts are not consistent...and the shafts can be in the wrong way. I can check that quite easily, and it's not difficult to fix as long as you have the right equipment. I also make sure the clubs are the right length for the individual. Again, mass-market clubs are made to certain lengths...but my shafts are tailor-made for the individual."

As an example, Mark checked out my driver which is 9.5-degrees with a grafalloy blue stiff shaft. The shaft was perfect...but the loft was, in fact, 11.5 degrees.

Mark's background in engineering has helped give him to tailor-make his own career as well. "I did an apprenticeship in mechanical and electrical engineering at school, then did a BA and then a PhD in engineering at the University of Bath. I also did a course and exams in club-fitting with the PCS, the Professional Club-building Society."



Mark on the swingometer... and (inset) measuring the angle of a clubface.

But is this just for elite golfers?

"Not at all," Mark explained. "The 28-handicapper has to give him or herself the best chance of making a good strike on the ball. Everybody has a different make-up, so one-size fits all clubs are not going to give you the best chance. It may be that the shafts are so heavy that the golfer cannot complete a proper swing. Or, for someone who is strong, the clubs may be so light that it makes them swing too fast."

It's not silly money, either.

An initial meeting for iron-fitting takes two hours and costs around £75.

"That may mean that I analyse the favourite club, and can give advice based on that," said Mark. "I can then recommend the proper model, shaft, shaft flex, and shaft length for the player.

"We utilise the unique Nakashima Htec clubhead design feature with its removable hosel connector. This allows us to rapidly test different shafts in the same clubhead.

"Of course, the key to consistent golf is to know the distance gap between hitting clubs. I also do wedge-fittings as well as drivers and other woods.

"Once the fitting is complete, the shafts can cost anywhere from £75 to £550. But the average spend is under £200. Obviously there are levels of clubs, and some sets can cost just over £1,000. But I always ask what budget we are working to before I start so there are no shocks at the end."

Mark's Trackman system gives the average golfer the benefits that many of the professionals enjoy. "By using this technology, I can take away the doubt about whether the clubs are right...then it is down to the technique of the player."

■ For more information, you can contact Mark at:

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## 20% OFF

### HGU SPECIAL OFFER

If you are interested, the HGU has negotiated a special deal with Mark which gives 20 per cent off the initial fitting session which normally costs £75. YOU MUST PRESENT THIS VOUCHER TO RECEIVE YOUR DISCOUNT.