

Ten Tips for Selling

Grips

Always check grips during a lesson; include grip companies when you host demo days; display them prominently, and include a variety of colors

By Scott Kramer



The deal with grips is this: If they're worn down, eroded completely, or are simply so smooth that they have no traction left, then golfers will instinctively hold them more tightly to maintain control of their golf club. That creates hand and arm tension, which restricts their swing motion and results in a loss of distance. And that means it's time for a change.

Suggesting regular grip changes is a must for PGA Professionals. The more dire the grips, the more you can help someone's game improve instantly with a re-grip. It's a good idea to change them all out at once, too—just like you'd do with a set of tires on a car. That will also help generate more sales in your golf shop.

Speaking of sales, here are some tips to help capitalize on your grip opportunities.

- 1 During a lesson, check your students' grip condition.** See how tightly they hold the grip, then look for any wear marks or erosion, and point it out to them with warnings of how it's affecting their ball flight.
- 2 Bring a selection of demo golf clubs with new grips to the lesson tee.** This makes it possible for golfers to feel the difference in grips and see how it can instantly improve their feel and shot direction.
- 3 Always keep your clubfitting clubs armed with the latest grip models.** People will not only put their hands on the grips, but they'll likely start asking about the grips and if they're right for their own clubs.

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Pat Sellers its 2011 Nationwide Tour rep.... **P3ProSwing** added Andy Edwards to its sales staff.... **Etonic** is offering a Fit Kit to green grass customers to give PGA Professionals and shop owners a merchandising tool that allows them to offer customers Etonic golf shoes without having to carry

inventory.... **Dick's Sporting Goods** purchased the Nicket Golf brand and brought out a new lineup of Nicket clubs.

Kentwool inked Matt Kuchar to wear its men's calf-length Tour Standard socks and appear on its website.... **Misra Golf** debuted the Passing Point 9003 forged cavityback irons (\$225/apiece) with a wider sole, offset and low

CG.... Boutique club company **C. Carnahan** has debuted three Vintage forged wedges (\$124.95 each) with custom sole grinds and five Insignia milled putters (\$199.95 apiece).... **Bag Boy** unveiled the 7-pound XLT-15 cart bag (\$159.95) featuring a Clip-Lok system that firmly secures clubs and prevents club damage during the round, 15 individual

Clip-Loks integrated into the 11-way organizer top, and full-length dividers.... **Srixon** debuted its WeatherFIT app on Apple's App Store that includes a ball-fitting guide.

Tour Edge introduced the 6A4V Titanium JMAX Gold driver (\$129) with 15 degree loft, offset hosel, deep CG, high
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What's new in grips

New for 2011 are unique surface patterns, multiple texture depth combinations, and new materials that improve traction.

- Three depths of surface grip texture on **Golf Pride's VDR** (\$5) results in heightened traction and all-weather performance. A shock-reducing rubber compound helps protect your wrists on harsh mis-hits.
- **Lamkin's R.E.L. with 3GEN** (\$7.99) features a synthetic rubber compound that minimizes impact shock. Its surface pattern is designed to maximize contact with a golfer's hands for comfort and tackiness. In turn, that reduces hand tension and smoothes the swing.
- **PURE Grips'** five rubber grips are now offered in a variety of colors – as well as the original standard black. Included is the company's shock-absorbing **Wrap** (\$8.99), which boasts medium firmness and plenty of tack.
- The **Softgrips Widow Maker** (\$9.39) sports a corded top for all-weather traction, plus a smooth-textured bottom for feel and performance.
- **SuperStroke Golf's** all-new, non-tapered **Slim Lite** jumbo putter grip (\$24.99) weighs just 55 grams. That allows it to be installed on any putter without altering the swingweight.
- **UST Mamiya's Pro DV** (\$8.29) is billed as the company's highest-performing, firmest-feeling model. Its half cord and dual compound technology enhance traction and feel. It aims to provide torsion strength and control.
- Honoring American soldiers, **Winn's SLF-Hero camouflage green/khaki** grip (\$8.49) for woods and irons is firm and features WinnLite technology (it weighs just 26g) that helps boost a golfer's swing speed so he or she can hit the ball farther.



4 When you host a demo day, make sure to include one or two grip companies. Grip manufacturers will be elated about showing up, and they may offer a free grip to each golfer, as well.

5 Stage a complimentary grip-cleaning station by your practice green, run by one of your assistants, who can also recommend when someone's grips need replacing. This will help reinforce in golfers' heads that clean grips provide better traction, and in turn allow them to swing and score better. Also have on hand a collection of putters with the latest oversized putter grips on them – and explain to golfers how popular these are becoming on the tours.

6 Run re-gripping specials on a regular basis. Eventually, your members will look forward to it. Maybe also offer a one-hour service, as well.

7 Text or e-mail your members/customers reminders that their grips should be replaced at least once a year. If you're e-mailing it, include a video of worn-out, cracked and slick grips, along with before-and-after footage of someone swinging a club with an old and new grip, respectively.

Preferably do this at the very beginning of every golf season.

8 Keep plenty of grips in your inventory that are weather-appropriate for your climate. If you're in the desert, carry soft, smooth wraps. If you're in the Northeast, stock a variety of half- and full-cord grips.

9 Offer grip-fitting services, and let your members know that the proper size grip – many manufacturers offer up to five sizes – can make all the difference in their game. Under-sized models promote increased hand action, tension in the forearms and shoulders, and pulled shoes, while oversized grips limit wrist rotation and tension, and can stiffle distance.

10 As obvious as it sounds, display grips prominently in your shop – perhaps on the counter next to your register. Put them on shafts so that golfers can hold them and imagine how they'd feel on their own clubs. Also showcase the array of new colors that are available this year. Maybe include a corded-grip section specially marked for people with sweaty hands, as well. ■

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MOI, and a 44.5-inch shaft.... **TaylorMade-adidas Golf** will open five new mono-brand stores across India this year, in Pune, Chandigarh, Bangalore, Mumbai and Kolkata.... **Miura Golf** named Charlie Gerber vice president-U.S. distribution.... **The Allen Edmonds Shoe Corp.** debuted the Honors Collection line of golf shoes, including the Links spikeless teaching shoe (\$245), Radan saddle-style shoe (\$345), Mullen classic Moc Toe blucher style (\$345), 1 Up wingtip (\$345), and Double Eagle with breathable mesh upper (\$345).

Winn Grips has named industry veteran Mark Christensen its brand manager.... Ben Crenshaw joined **Cleveland Golf's** tour staff, and will also be a design consultant for both the Newer Promise and Cleveland putter lines. Parent company Srixon inked Peter Jacobsen to its tour staff. He'll play Srixon balls and play Srixon and Cleveland clubs, plus wear a Srixon hat and glove, and carry a Srixon bag.... **Feel Golf** has acquired Pro Line Sports.... **Eidolon Golf, LLC** reorganized as Eidolon Brands, LLC, to facilitate the securing of additional growth capital and recruitment of equity partner and vice president Shawn Dirwiddle. ●

new Ashworth shoes

Ashworth recently launched a new line of footwear to complete a full head to toe look. Of the four models, three – the Encinitas slip-on loafer (\$140), Lucadia suede/leather saddle (\$90) and Ash Standard Issue canvas lace-up (\$70) – are intended strictly for off-course use. The lone golf shoe model, Cardiff (\$120), can also be worn off-course but is blessed with a spikier rubber sole bearing ridges for on-course traction in bunkers and wet grass. The upper is made of tumbled leather with rich suede accents. Incredibly comfortable, it has a two-year waterproof warranty.



"We think the next seven to 10 years in golf will be about a return to sensible wearability," says Harry Arnett, vice president and general manager of Ashworth Golf, who admits he wants the shoes to represent what the Ashworth brand is all about. "The global brands have pushed performance. What we see left is a fashion opportunity for the 40-year-old guy in golf. That is a guy who doesn't want to put on a golf uniform, but wants to dress for golf, could wear the same shoes to work, to go out to dinner, and chase the kids around the yard in."

"That applies strongly in the golf footwear category – particularly as golf footwear has gotten so performance-oriented that a more stylish shoe can be worn with anything in your closet. There really hasn't been anything like that in awhile."