

Custom fitted clubs increase golf enjoyment, study finds

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For as long as I've been playing golf – almost 15 years now – I have been told that I should never buy clubs off the rack. I know it flies in the face of what many sporting goods stores and online retailers would prefer you do, but having a proper fitting (even a half-decent one) will drastically increase the chances that a consumer will purchase the right equipment for their game.

(Here is where I will make a mere aside to propose my argument that golfers should learn how to hit any piece of equipment properly – even opposite their strong hand. Seriously. But, for the weekend hacker and rare company outing scrub, game improvement equipment is a necessary part of enjoying golf as opposed to tireless hours on the range to work on mechanics and, you know, getting better at golf.)

Well, a study of golfers conducted jointly by our friends at Sports Illustrated and golf retailer Golfsmith – one of the pioneering golf shops in promoting proper fitting – has found that what I was told for years was true. Don't buy equipment off the rack and you will like it better.

The results of the survey are announced Thursday in Orlando at the PGA Merchandising Show.

The basic numbers? 90% of golfers are not playing properly fitted equipment. And of that 90%, 92% of them saw better results when they were fitted properly.

None of that is shocking, but it belabors an important point for golfers. The game is more fun when you have the proper equipment in your hands. You don't show up to a gun fight with a machete, so why show up to the golf course with the wrong weapons?

[Forbes Magazine reported on the study findings on their website Thursday](#), completely missing the point. The idea is not that the golf industry would see some enormous boost in its microeconomy if more players got fitted. There are far too many factors that hamper the game beyond the intrinsic value of golf clubs.

Frankly, the logic would work to the contrary – if golfers had the right equipment, they would get better (and play more often) and hold onto their sticks for longer. The consumers that just can't help themselves and shell out a couple hundo for the latest in equipment will likely do so with or without fitting because either (a) they have the means to do so, or (b) they love golf clubs as much as I love electronic gizmos.

Regardless of the outlook for the industry and the economic conclusions reached by the study, the point should be understood: don't buy clubs off the rack!

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