



Rotating hole locations from one side of a practice green to another is a great way to disperse foot traffic.

MANAGING TRAFFIC ON THE PRACTICE GREEN

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Practice greens typically experience more foot traffic than any other green on a golf course. Left unchecked, concentrated foot traffic can quickly lead to turf thinning and decline of the playing surface. Together, golfers and turf managers can help ensure quality conditions persist on practice greens by following a few simple steps.

Hole locations closest to the first tee or cart path will likely experience the most golfer traffic simply out of convenience. Golfers that make a conscious effort to utilize other areas of a practice green when warming up help disperse traffic over a larger area, minimizing the likelihood of damage.

Turf managers can help disperse traffic on a practice green by selecting unique hole locations. One approach is to rotate all the hole locations from one side of the practice green to the next. This is not intended to inconvenience golfers but rather to protect an area that has historically been an issue or

is showing signs of wear. If golfers see that hole locations are set on one side of a practice green, they should refrain from setting up a target for putting to in the area that is being preserved and stick to the established hole locations.

Standing in the same spot to repeatedly hit putts can result in substantial damage in the shape of two footprints. If there is a need to repeatedly putt from the same location, it is recommended to stand on a towel. However, this only provides so much protection. Periodically rotating one's stance is always the best course of action.

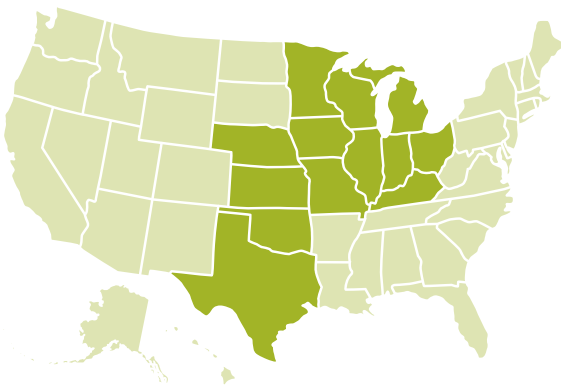
If areas of a practice green continue to become worn it might be a sign that the hole locations need to be changed more frequently. With the amount of time devoted to practice by the modern golfer, changing the holes on practice greens twice a week is probably not enough for most golf facilities. If changing holes more frequently doesn't do the trick, practice greens might be too small for the amount of use and may need to be expanded.

Practice greens can provide high-quality conditions throughout the season when golfers and turf managers are mindful of traffic patterns and do their part to disperse wear.



For information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service Contact the Green Section Staff.

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