



## Getting the "late starter" started

Since the oldster does not possess the coordination and free-swinging ability of a youngster, I start them out on the practice putting green, which is the best, I think. To me the putting green is the ideal place to get the late starters to make actual contact with the ball. It's also the best place to teach them the proper grip, stance and posture. If you take them straight to the practice tee, it can be a difficult task getting them to make solid contact with the ball because of their usual lack of coordination. They can become easily discouraged and even decide to quit. On and around the putting green, however, it's easier to get them to hit the ball and holing a

few putts or chip shots can be a big boost to their morale. I impress upon them the importance of mastering the short game as this is the area where they will save strokes. It's only after they make fairly consistent contact with the ball that I take them out to the practice tee and start them hitting longer shots. I have them hit quarter shots, half shots and three-quarter shots before they take any full swings. This method is slower than that of teaching youngsters but I've found that by building up the short game first, it's easier to build a consistent swing for late comers to golf—and keep up their morale, too.

