



ALL GOLF IS Golf

Attracting more people to the game of golf means broadening the types of play. Whether you're at the driving range, a pitch and putt, a golf simulator or enjoying some family fun at mini golf, it's all much of the same – strike the white ball with gusto (precision comes with practice) and you're away.

MANY people hesitate to play at a traditional golf club for a myriad of reasons. Beginner golfers are often intimidated by the formalities, females may lack confidence in a male dominated playing field, pricey green fees and membership costs can deter one's golfing ambitions and those who have busy lives simply can't find the time to play a full 18 holes.

Ladies Golf Magazine casts no judgement on how you get your golfing fix, and all forms of ball hitters are encouraged by us. Read on to see what the current state of play is on a national level (hint; golf is booming in Australia) and learn about other types of golf that might suit you too.

PITCH AND PUTT

Pitch and putt is an amateur sport very similar to, and derived from, golf, where the hole length is short (on average up to 90 metres) and just 2-3 clubs are typically used. It's played in dozens of countries and is a great way for players wanting to work on their short game skills. A pitch and putt facility literally require only pitches, chips and putts. It suits golfers of all abilities and is excellent for kids with shorter attention spans and time poor adults alike.

There are a number of pitch and putt courses currently operating in Australia who also conduct events that have been the lifeblood of the game and encompass all forms of golf from social to competition; with State, National and International Championships. Fully fledged handicapping systems and ranking of players have also generated a brand of specialist pitch & putt players akin to T20 in cricket.



MINI GOLF

Isn't just for amusement parks anymore. There's world class mini golf courses on offer nowadays and it's a great way to be introduced to the game in a relaxed setting. Effectively a miniaturised golf course this style of play opens the community up to non-golfers and isn't subject to a bunch of rules and tradition.

The success of SHANX mini golf is testament to its popularity with a new generation of golfers. SHANX facilities feature a professionally-designed, scaled-down version of a full-size golf course, staffed by friendly and helpful people that are clearly committed to helping new players gain confidence on the green.

Golf industry veteran, Peter Vlahandreas (the Managing Director of GreenSpace Management who operate SHANX) stated, "Most people playing are non-golfers, in fact most people playing SHANX have probably never been to a golf club before."

VIRTUAL GOLF

Enjoy realistic, fast and fun indoor simulator golf experiences. A golf simulator allows golf to be played on a graphically or photographically simulated driving range or golf course, usually in an indoor setting. It can capture data on both ball and club and record accurate speed and directional information, and simulated ball flight behaviour. Many indoor golf venues feature state-of-the-art facilities to help golfers learn, practice and play the game of golf. Bonus points for those who have a sports bar set-up too because hmmm even indoor golf can be strenuous.

SPEEDGOLF

Speedgolf is a fun, fast, and fitness-based alternative to traditional golf that involves playing a round of golf in the shortest time and fewest possible number of shots. Speedgolf can be played in a range of formats to suits golfers and runners of all abilities. The sport began in the 1970s in California and is now enjoyed around the world. Speedgolf Australia was founded in 2013 and provides education and support to players and golf clubs around the country.

Ground-breaking research marks Australian golf's new direction as it sets its sights on a solid path for post-pandemic growth. Officially launched by the Australian Golf Industry Council – a collaboration of golf's main industry bodies – the findings of the Nature Report are the most comprehensive on golf to date.

KEY FINDINGS INCLUDE:

- 9 million Australians are 'interested' in golf of which less than 5% are members.
- 5.8 million of those Aussies interested in golf have not yet played a game (54 percent male and 46 percent female).
- There are 1.645 million players of 'alternative' forms of golf, including 295,000 categorised as 'ball-hitters'.
- Many children (an estimated 1.140 million) are interested in playing alternative forms of golf, second-only to swimming among organised sports.
- Golf is considered fun, accessible, a game for life and good for mental and physical health.
- Engaging women and girls remains its greatest challenge though there have been recent increases in female participation.
- Shorter forms of the game and improved public facilities hold a key to the future.
- Kirkman said the report showed that finding an entry point for golfers would be critical to the game's future. "We know golf is a game that can be played by anyone at any age, it's fun, it's enjoyable and it's good for your health. "We need to ensure golf, in its many formats, is in the consideration set particularly for women and juniors. "Availability of different entry points so people can find their way into the game is key," he said. "Whether it's at a golf club or mini golf facility, a driving range, or a simulator experience shouldn't matter – all golf is golf"