

FINDING THE BALL

Most golf balls look alike – white and round. But some are actually better for your game than others. They help fix deficiencies in your swing. If your tee shots need more distance, there's a ball that spins less with your swing and will carry further than most others once it leaves your driver's clubface. If you don't generate enough spin on your chip shots, there's surely a ball on the market that'll add spin for your particular stroke – allowing you to cozy shots up to the pin more easily.

So how do you find the right ball for your game? Perhaps the best way remains the old standby: Simple trial and error. But technology has opened up other avenues of ball fitting. Titleist and Bridgestone offer in-person ball-fitting services to consumers – if you're lucky to catch up with these mobile services. Titleist's three fitting vans are each armed with Trackman devices that measure swing and ball data. Each fitting session takes just 15 minutes. Titleist sales reps also conduct another 1,500 ball-fitting days each year. The company's ball fitting is based on first finding you the ball that gets the greenside spin you're seeking so your scoring shots improve. On the other hand, Bridgestone's traveling Ball Challenge aims to help you choose a ball based on your driver swing characteristics so you can find more fairways with distance. Either way, you can't lose because getting fitted in person allows you to see how the balls perform in full flight. Check the companies' respective websites for schedules.

Several other manufacturers have interactive systems on their websites that'll do the job, too -- assuming you answer the questions honestly. Many independent clubfitting studios offer ball fitting, as well. And Bridgestone recently started a "BFIT" online ball-fitting chat between its technicians and consumers: Type in any question and you'll receive immediate answers from a real person.

The advantages to getting fitted for golf balls are simple: You'll find a ball that feels the way you want it to and performs best where and when you need it. Your current ball may only be accomplishing some of the necessary tasks. But why compromise? Getting fitted for a ball takes a matter of minutes. And you may very well find your scores lower quickly thereafter.



TAYLORMADE BURNER TOUR

TaylorMade's Burner Tour ball sports a new, softer cover and large, low-compression core for performance around the green while keeping the driver spin low. It feels very soft. Compared to the current Burner ball, it achieves 15 percent more spin on 30-yard shots – where you need it – and less spin on 8-iron-and-longer shots. \$22, TaylorMadeGolf.com

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BRIDGESTONE TOUR B330-RX

Bridgestone's Tour B330-RX features a soft core and reformulated mantle that reduces excess spin, resulting in straighter shots. Its ionomer inner cover helps increase velocity and reduce sidespin on long shots.
\$56, BridgestoneGolf.com



SRIXON SOFTFEEL 2010

Srixon's low-compression SoftFeel 2010 outdoes its predecessor for driver distance, soft feel and greenside spin. Its dimple pattern lowers drag and improves lift so shots won't balloon.
\$19.99, Srixon.com

TITLEIST NXT

Titleist's NXT offers more distance and straightness than the NXT Extreme it replaced. It's Titleist's most durable ball, and it features a high-velocity, low-spin, solid core. \$34, Titleist.com



CALLAWAY TOUR i(z)

Callaway's Tour i(z) has a refined HEX aerodynamics pattern on its urethane cover, which carves through wind with a piercing, penetrating flight. \$42.99, CallawayGolf.com