

## 5 Things Every Golfer Should Know About Aerating Greens

During the spring and summer months in North Florida and the majority of the southeastern states aerification of the putting greens is a rite of passage so to speak. No golfers are ever thrilled to arrive at a course, only to find that they will be putting on greens that have just been aerated. Aerating putting greens might create a short-term disruption in your game, but the long-term benefits greatly outweigh the inconvenience. Learning more about why and how superintendents aerate putting greens can make it easier to be patient during the process. Here are five things every golfer should know about aeration:

### 1. We aerate to improve, not annoy

Putting greens receive more traffic than any other playing surface. The aeration process helps relieve the compaction caused by all that traffic. It also helps create a firm, smooth putting surface by controlling thatch and promoting healthy turf roots.

### 2. Scratch the thatch

Thatch is a layer of old plant material that accumulates at the soil surface. If thatch on putting greens is not diluted by aeration and topdressing, it will act like a sponge, holding water near the surface. Excessive thatch creates soft playing conditions, inconsistent green speeds and increases the risk of disease.

### 3. Timing is everything

Do you ever wonder why aeration is commonly performed when putting greens are playing their best? Aerating when grass is healthy and actively growing minimizes damage and allows for a quick return to optimal playing conditions. Aerating at other times may be more convenient for the golf schedule, but it lengthens recovery times, increases the risk of an invasion of weeds and could cause lasting damage.

### 4. It's not as bad as you think

It may seem like there are more holes than grass on the putting greens right after they've been aerated, but this is an illusion. Typically, aeration affects less than 10 percent of a putting surface.

### 5. Sand is part of the plan

A heavy application of topdressing following aeration may appear to make putting greens less playable. However, filling aeration holes with sand actually helps create a smoother surface. Sand also creates channels for water and air movement, dilutes thatch and helps putting greens recover from aeration more quickly.



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