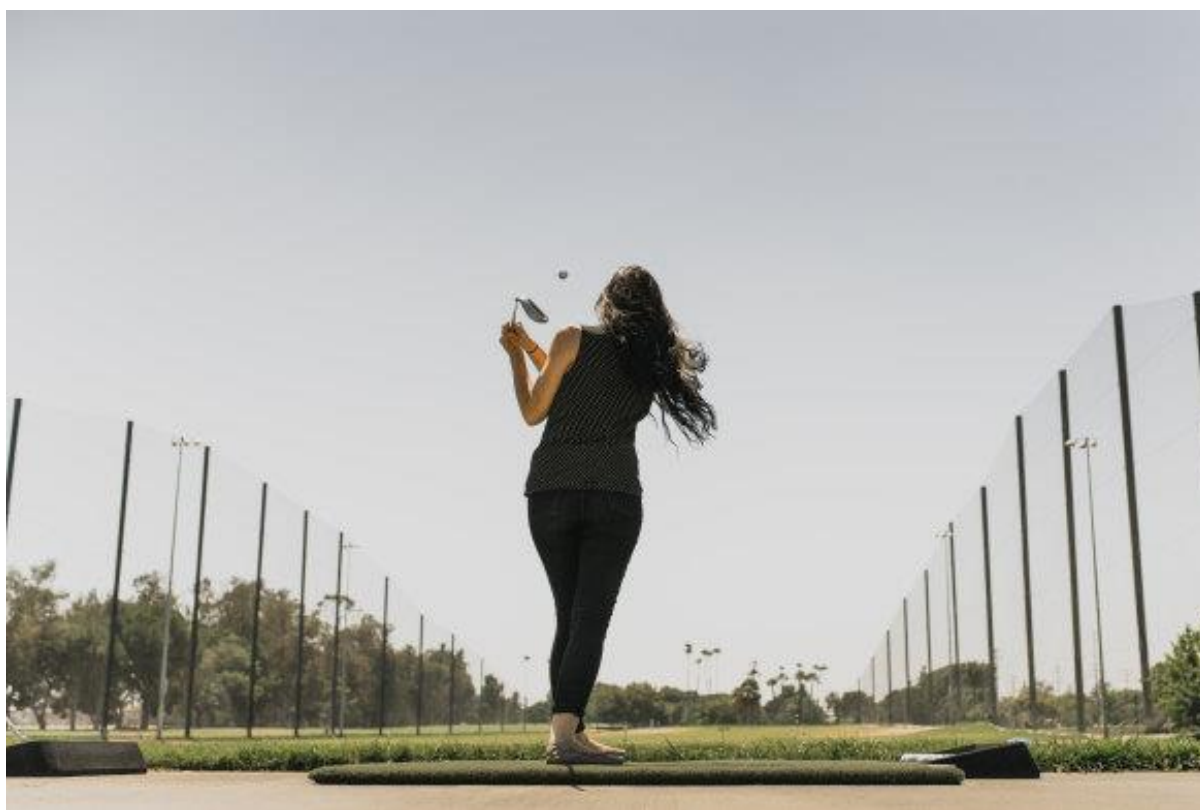


‘You block out all the pressures’: More women are getting teed off in the best way

EVELYN LEWIN

When Jessica Eden picked up a golf club for the first time, she never thought it would ignite passion for a sport she once considered boring. Rather, the 47-year-old mother wanted to “see what all the fuss was about”.



Unlike more physically challenging pursuits, golf can be played “well into your senior years”, says PGA professional, Lisa Newling.

CREDIT STOCKSY

As a company director, Jessica had been invited to countless industry golf days before but had always declined those offers. She simply couldn’t see what the thrill was in “hitting a white ball around for six hours”. But two years ago, Jessica decided to give the sport a chance and booked a golf weekend with a friend. From her very first swing, she was hooked. She then enlisted a fortnightly golf coach and joined an eight-week women’s golf clinic. Nowadays she “lives and breathes” the game and tries to play it once a week.

She also shares her passion, having launched the Australian Women's Golf Network on International Women's Day last year. The network has more than 2500 members nationwide, with those figures continuing to climb.

"If you speak to any of the golf clubs across Australia, they'll tell you that women have picked up golf in such huge numbers," Jessica says. "It's just booming at the moment."

Lisa Newling is a PGA professional at Palm Beach Golf Club in NSW who's been teaching golf for more than 25 years. She agrees there's been a huge surge in women giving golf a go and understands why it's proving so popular.

She says that walking for hours while surrounded by nature is beneficial for both your physical and mental health, offering a much-needed breather from the stresses of everyday life.

It's also a great chance to socialise. Newling says it takes about two hours to complete nine holes, four hours for a full round. "So you're spending quite a bit of time with people," she adds. This can facilitate deeper social connections which further boost wellbeing.

But finding a spare handful of hours to play a game might seem a stretch. As the mother of a five-year-old, Jessica gets it. She acknowledges golf can be a "big commitment" in terms of time but says it's absolutely worth it.

And people of all ages can tap into the "holiday feeling" golf provides, Newling adds. Unlike more physically challenging pursuits, she points out that golf can be played "well into your senior years", meaning it's never too late to take up the sport.

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