How Video Can Reduce Medical Errors And Improve Patient Care

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About eight years ago I was desperate to improve my golf game. I just couldn't straighten out my drives or hit my irons crisply. (Yes, I'm fully aware that this is a first world problem). I decided to try golf camp in Palm Springs for a few days.

My sensei, a crusty ex-touring pro named Artie McNickle, watched me hit several dozen balls on the driving range, video recorder running. "So, did you figure it out?" I asked with hint of sarcasm after my last shot. I thought I was a hard case.

"Sure."

"How long did it take you?" I asked.

"One or two swings. But you looked like you were having a good time, so I didn't have the heart to stop you."

Artie patiently told me what I was doing wrong. Though it made sense in theory, when I tried to follow his directions, I didn't get very far.

"Let's look at the video," he offered. "Whose swing do you really admire?"

I named Ernie Els and Tiger Woods, two pros with silky smooth yet powerful swings.

"Fine," he said. On a video screen, I appeared on the left side. As if by magic, Ernie Els was on the right.

“OK, let’s see where your club is about 18 inches into your backswing.” My hands were low, and the club formed a straight line with my arms; my wrists hadn’t begun to cock. He then showed Els at the exact same point in his swing. His club was facing skyward, forming an acute angle with his wrists. This wasn’t a subtle difference in technique; it was an enormous one.We then reviewed my follow-through. Once again, about two feet after I’d struck the ball, my club extended straight out from my arms. Conversely, Els had his wrists swiveled about 45 degrees counterclockwise, his right hand rotated powerfully over his left.

Tiger’s swing was slightly different, but similar in all the ways that mattered.

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