

Handicap FAQ

(Adapted from The USGA Handicap System in Brief©)

What is a Handicap Index®?

A Handicap Index® (Index) is the number issued by your golf club that represents your potential scoring ability. Each score posted is adjusted to reflect the difficulty of the course played and only the 10 best of your most recent 20 scores are included in your Index. Your Index travels wherever you play and is used to determine your Course Handicap™.

Why do I need a handicap?

- Handicaps allow fair competition among players of different abilities
- Handicaps provide a barometer of a golfer's progress or improvement over time.
- Handicaps allow for peer review of scores to ensure the integrity of the game.
- Handicaps are often required for participation in tournaments of all kinds, including the EWGA Championship.

When should I get a handicap?

Once you start playing 9 or 18-hole rounds, you should establish your handicap. After you have obtained a handicap number from your handicapping service (GHIN, GLMS, etc.), you will need to post scores from five 18-hole or ten 9-holes rounds of golf to get your first Handicap Index.

What is a Course Handicap™?

A Course Handicap represents the number of strokes a player receives from a specific set of tees at the course being played to adjust the player's scoring ability to the level of scratch or zero-handicap golf.

Golf courses vary in difficulty and each set of tees presents a different challenge. For this reason, a Course Handicap™ adjusts your Index to reflect the challenge of the particular course and tees you are playing. Your Course Handicap™ can be higher or lower than your Index depending on the Slope Rating™ of the course being played.

How do I determine my Course Handicap™?

Look for the Course Handicap™ Table for the set of tees that you will use during play. These tables can usually be found in the course clubhouse near the posting computer. If not, ask the staff for a copy.

Since there are separate tables for men and women and a table for each set of tees, be sure to ask for the correct table – the Women's Table for the Red Tees, for example. Locate your Index on the table to find your Course Handicap™. This whole number tells you how many strokes you will be given for the course and is also used to determine the maximum number of strokes you can post for any hole (see **Equitable Stroke Control** below). You can also use the online [USGA Course Handicap calculator](#). You will need to know the Slope Rating for the set of tees you are playing.

What is a Course Rating™?

A Course Rating™ represents the playing difficulty of a course for a scratch golfer (a golfer with a zero or less Handicap Index) under normal weather and course conditions.

What is a Slope Rating®?

The Slope Rating® represents the relative playing difficulty of a course for a non-scratch golfer compared to a scratch golfer. The higher the Slope Rating®, the greater the gap in expected scores between the scratch golfer and the non-scratch player.

What is Equitable Stroke Control™?

Equitable Stroke Control™ (ESC™) keeps an exceptionally bad hole from changing your Handicap Index® too much and sets a maximum number of strokes that a player can post on any hole depending on the player's **Course Handicap™**.

For handicap purposes, after the round you are required to adjust your hole scores (actual or probable for holes not completed) when they are higher than the maximum ESC™ number you can post. All scores, including tournament scores, are adjusted for ESC™ before posting. There is no limit to the number of holes on which you can adjust your score for ESC™. See the ESC Table below:

| Course Handicap | Max # on Any Hole |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 9 or less | Double Bogey |
| 10 through 19 | 7 |
| 20 through 29 | 8 |
| 30 through 39 | 9 |
| 40 or more | 10 |

If you have any further questions about your handicap or how to establish a handicap, feel free to contact handicap@myewga.com. You can also learn more about the USGA Handicap System at USGA.org.