

1 What is a handicap?

A handicap is defined as a measure of a player's "current ability over an entire round of golf". A handicap essentially signifies how many strokes above or below par a golfer should be able to play.

A handicap is required to play in competitions and gives less proficient players a way of competing against better players, ensuring a level playing field. A golfer with a handicap of 18 subtracts 18 shots off their final total in a stroke round, whereas a scratch golfer (a handicap of zero) doesn't get any help.

2 How do I get a handicap?

An official Golf Australia Handicap can only be obtained by joining a golf club (e.g. Blackwood). Many competitions will require players to have an official Golf Australia Handicap to be eligible to compete.

At least three 18-hole rounds or six 9-hole rounds (or a combination of the two) must be played before a handicap is allocated. All qualifying rounds must be played with a marker (i.e. a playing partner who marks and signs your scorecard). Cards are then submitted to the Golf Coordinator in the office to calculate the handicap. The maximum GA Handicap under the World Handicap System is 54.0 for both men and women.

Along with their GA Handicap, players are allocated a GOLF Link Number, which is a number unique to them.

3 How does my handicap get adjusted?

With a handicap being your passport into official club competitions, each round presents an opportunity to revise your handicap either higher or lower.

Handicaps are calculated by averaging the eight lowest scores from the last 20 rounds played.

Every new round played deletes the oldest one in the 20-round span, which can explain why a handicap can change dramatically if a particularly good score drops out.

If 20 rounds haven't yet been completed, a sliding scale formula is applied to produce handicap adjustments on the way to the 20-round benchmark.

4 How do I track my handicap?

GOLF Link is Australia's handicap system software and by logging on to www.golfink.com.au or downloading the GOLF Link app, players can monitor their scores and view their most up-to-date handicap.

Your current GA Handicap (rather than your Daily Handicap) will appear below your name on the booking sheet. Your scorecard will reflect your Daily Handicap which will vary depending on which course you are playing in that competition (e.g. Blue or White).

5 Further information on handicaps

For further information on handicaps, see:

- www.golfaustralia.org.au - section on handicapping

- www.golfink.com.au
- Your Captain or Vice-Captain at the club. (See Members' Handbook or photo boards).