

# Chapter 8

## The Super Chapter: The Perception Trap, Rewiring Feel, Ego, and Resistance to Change

Ask most golfers, even elite professionals, how they play their best golf, and the answer is almost always:

“I’m a feel player.”

It sounds romantic, artistic and intuitive. And in many ways, it’s true. Golf, at its highest expression, feels effortless. Fluid. Alive. But “feel”, though central to performance, is also often misunderstood. When misunderstood, it always becomes a seductive trap.

Feel is not a technique. It’s not a swing thought. It’s not a reliable blueprint for performance. Feel is perception. And perception does not dwell in logic but in biology.

When a player describes a day when the club moved like an extension of their body, and the swing was fluid and crisp, they are describing feel. But what they do not always realise is that feel isn’t created in the moment; it is revealed by it. What they are experiencing is the emerging

result of structure, rehearsal, sequence and emotional clarity.

However, here’s the issue: feel is unpredictable. It’s influenced by your nervous system, which is naturally reactive. It reacts to pressure, uncertainty, fatigue, and fear. When it does, perception changes. Let’s explore this more deeply.

## The five levels of perception

Feel is not a single perception but a layered system of interpretation, and those layers fluctuate depending on your state.

| Level                       | Description                                                           | Trust Level      |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Raw Sensation            | Primitive signals like tightness, tension, shallow breath.            | Low              |
| 2. Subjective Feel          | Swing rhythm, flow, balance – real but often unreliable.              | Variable         |
| 3. Cognitive Interpretation | Self-talk, memory and emotional bias.                                 | Unstable         |
| 4. Awareness                | Physical feedback: posture, weight shift, contact.                    | Moderate to High |
| 5. Integrated Perception    | Calm, clear, spatial awareness. Club, body and target simultaneously. | High             |

When you are calm and alert, Levels 4 and 5 dominate, and your feel becomes precise and actionable. However, under stress, your perception tends to deteriorate. You may still think you are “feeling”, but you are actually reacting. This explains why feel vanishes when you need it most.

## **The conflict of change: when feel and real collide**

This leads us to a crucial point in every golfer’s journey: swing change. When you start adjusting your motion, your feel works against you. The club “feels” different. Your arms seem disconnected. The motion feels wrong. But it’s not wrong; it’s just unfamiliar.

Your nervous system maintains a baseline of your swing, like an internal photograph. It refers to that image to assess everything you do. When you change the picture, it triggers an alarm.

“This isn’t you!”

So, you revert to the default, and the old swing returns. This is why improvement often fails, not because of mechanics but because of perception. When players give up on change, it is rarely because the technique was not better; it is because it did not feel better. They then label it as “not me”. This is how feel becomes the saboteur of progress.