



**EXPLICACIÓN DE COMO OBTIENE O GENERA SU HANDICAP EL NUEVO SISTEMA
ADQUIRIDO PARA EL MANEJO DE HANDICAPS EN EL CLUB**
(Versión Ingles)

Golf Handicap formula explained step-by-step

Curious how your golf handicap is calculated? The USGA golf handicap formula is not rocket science, so anyone - even non-math folks - can understand how to determine their golf handicap. What math functions will you need to know? How about addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, rounding and truncating? Simple enough? This article will dissolve any difficulty related to figuring an 18-hole USGA handicap.

Terminology related to calculating a handicap include: (See below after all this explication).

*⁽¹⁾ Adjusted Gross Score, *⁽²⁾ Course Rating, *⁽³⁾ Slope Rating

*⁽⁴⁾ Handicap Differential, *⁽⁵⁾ Handicap Index, *⁽⁶⁾ Course Handicap

Note that the Handicap Index is the USGA-defined "portable handicap" which you can take to any course. You use the Handicap Index to calculate your Course Handicap for any particular course. Again, remember that your Handicap Index is the same from course to course. Your Course handicap, a number for a specific course, is determined using your Handicap Index.

The steps for calculating a Course Handicap are:

1. Convert gross scores to Adjusted Gross Scores
2. Calculate Handicap Differential for each score
3. Select lowest Handicap Differentials
4. Average lowest Handicap Differentials
5. Multiply the average Handicap Differential by 96%
6. Arrive at Handicap Index by truncating - deleting - the number(s) to the right of tenths
7. Calculate Course Handicap

Step 1: Convert Original Gross Scores to Adjusted Gross Scores

To arrive at an Adjusted Gross Score, you use the USGA's Equitable Stroke Control (ESC). ESC is used to downwardly adjust individual hole scores for handicapping purposes in order to create handicaps that better represent a golfer's playing ability. ESC imposes a maximum number of strokes that can be entered for any given hole. This maximum is based on the golfer's Course Handicap and is obtained from the table shown below.

Course Handicap	Maximum Score
9 or less	Double bogey
10 through 19	7
20 through 29	8
30 through 39	9
40 and above	10

An example of a downward adjustment may be helpful. Let's say that a player with a Course Handicap of 18 scores a nine on one of the holes. His nine would be downwardly adjusted to a seven because players with handicaps in the 10 to 19 range are allowed a maximum score of seven on any given hole. Once you make adjustments, if necessary, to all eighteen holes, the sum of these 18 holes is the Adjusted Gross Score.

Step 2: Calculate Handicap Differentials for Each Score

The second step in computing a Handicap Index is to compute a Handicap Differential for each score that is to be considered in the Handicap Index calculation. The Handicap Differential is computed using the following formula:

$$\text{Handicap Differential} = (\text{Adjusted Gross Score} - \text{Course Rating}) \times 113 \div \text{Slope Rating}$$

(The Course Rating is what the USGA deems a scratch golfer would score on a course under normal playing conditions. A Slope Rating of 113 is for a course of standard difficulty according to the USGA.)

Round the Handicap Differential to the nearest tenth (i.e., 17.25=17.3, 11.34=11.3, etc.).

Step 3: Select Best, or Lowest, Handicap Differentials

The third step in calculating your Handicap Index is to select the lowest Handicap Differentials. The following table is used when selecting the best, or lowest, Handicap Differentials. If more than 20 scores have been entered, the 10 best differentials of the 20 most recent scores are used for the calculation.

<u>Number of Handicap Differentials Available</u>	<u>Differentials Used</u>
5 or 6	Lowest 1
7 or 8	Lowest 2
9 or 10	Lowest 3
11 or 12	Lowest 4
13 or 14	Lowest 5
15 or 16	Lowest 6
17	Lowest 7
18	Lowest 8
19	Lowest 9
20	Lowest 10

The USGA does not calculate a handicap until five scores have been recorded.

Step 4: Calculate the Average of the Lowest Handicap Differentials

If there are 10 Handicap Differentials (scores) available, calculate the average for the lowest, or best, 3 Handicap Differentials. If there are 15 Handicap Differentials (scores) available, calculate the average for the lowest, or best, 6 Handicap Differentials. Once a player has at least 20 scores, always use the 10 best, or lowest, Handicap Differentials from the most recent 20 scores.

Step 5: Multiply Average of Handicap Differentials by 0.96 or 96%

The fifth step in calculating the Handicap Index is to compute the net Handicap Differential average. For the USGA the percentage by which the Handicap Differential averages are multiplied is 96%.

Step 6: Truncate, or Delete, Numbers to the Right of Tenths

Step six in computing the Handicap Index, is to delete the digits after the tenths for the number derived in Step 5. Do NOT round off to the nearest tenths place. As established by the USGA, the default maximum Handicap Index on an 18-hole course is 36.4 for males and 40.4 for females. On a nine-hole course the default maximum Handicap Index is 18.2 for males and 20.2 for females. The maximum ceiling can be increased.

Example of a Handicap Index Calculation:

The following is an example of how the Handicap Index is calculated using the USGA System. This example assumes only 14 scores have been posted for this golfer.

Sum of the lowest five Handicap Differentials: 68.7

Average of lowest Handicap Differentials (68.7 divided by 5): 13.74

Handicap Differential Average multiplied by 96%: 13.1904

Truncate (delete) digits after tenths place: 13.1

Handicap Index: 13.1

Step 7: Calculate Course Handicap

The final step is to calculate a Course Handicap. A Course Handicap is the number of strokes a player receives on each particular course. Determine a course handicap by multiplying the Handicap Index by the Slope Rating (from the course and tee you choose) and dividing by 113 (standard difficulty rating). Round the result to the nearest whole number.

Course Handicap = Index x (Slope Rating of Tee on Course / 113)

Example of a Course Handicap Calculation:

The following assumes an index of 12.5 and a Home course slope of 120.

Course Handicap = 12.5 x 120 / 113

= 1500 / 113

= 13.27

= 13

For 9-hole handicaps, you can follow this formula replacing the 18-hole Course Rating with a 9-hole Course Rating. The Slope is the same for 18 and 9 hole calculations.

You've now seen how all the pieces of the puzzle fit together for calculating a Handicap Index and Course Handicap. You've picked up or refreshed your memory on some golf handicap terminology. You've noted that none of the calculations is magical, but simple math. If you are interested in more information, you can always read through the current USGA Handicap Manual on their website (USGA.org).

TERMINOLOGY

***(1) Adjusted Gross Score**

The "Adjusted Gross Score" is one of the ways that the USGA uses to make sure a player's handicap represents his or her potential. Rather than use an unusually high score on a hole to include in a portion of the handicap calculation, for handicapping purposes, that high score is adjusted downwards according to the player's Course Handicap. The USGA Handicap Manuals says...

An "adjusted gross score" is a player's gross score adjusted under USGA Handicap System procedures for unfinished holes, conceded strokes, holes not played or not played under the Rules of Golf, or Equitable Stroke Control.

Reformatting for clarity, the above statement would look like this:

An "adjusted gross score" is a player's gross score adjusted under USGA Handicap System procedures for...
unfinished holes
conceded strokes
holes not played or not played under the Rules of Golf
Equitable Stroke Control

***(2) What is the USGA's "Course Rating"?**

An important component of the USGA Handicap System is the "course rating." What is a course rating? In an article titled, "Course Rating Primer," it states:

"A USGA Course Rating is the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as the number of strokes taken to one decimal place (72.5), and is based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring difficulty of the scratch golfer."

A male scratch golfer is one who can "play to a Course Handicap of zero on any and all rated golf courses. A male scratch golfer, for rating purposes, can hit tee shots an average of 250 yards and can reach a 470-yard hole in two shots at sea level." A female scratch golfer can "hit tee shots an average of 210 yards and can reach a 400-yard hole in two shots at sea level."

Each set of tees on a golf course receives a Course Rating and a Slope Rating. You can read more about the Course Rating at the USGA website including the history.

***(3) What is the "slope rating" of a golf course?**

Here is what the USGA says in its Handicap Manual:

A "Slope Rating" is the USGA's mark that indicates the measurement of the relative difficulty of a course for players who are not scratch golfers compared to the USGA Course Rating (e.g., compared to the difficulty of a course for scratch golfers. A Slope Rating is computed from the difference between the Bogey Rating and the USGA Course Rating. The lowest Slope Rating is 55 and the highest is 155. A golf course of standard playing difficulty has a Slope Rating of 113.

***(4) What is a "handicap differential"?**

This is how the USGA defines a handicap differential:

A "Handicap Differential" is the difference between a player's adjusted gross score and the USGA Course Rating of the course on which the score was made, multiplied by 113, then divided by the Slope Rating from the tees played and rounded to the nearest tenth, e.g., 12.8.

If you look at this statement in more of a mathematical formula, it looks like this:

Handicap Differential = (Adjusted Gross Score - Course Rating) x 113 ÷ Slope Rating [result rounded to nearest tenth]

The number 113 is considered the normative or standard slope for a course.

Our Handicap Systems use the exact USGA formulas including the one for calculating the handicap differentials.

***(5) USGA Handicap Index - What is it & how is it calculated?**

If you had a USGA Handicap Index, a par golfer, a golfer a bit better than you and one worse than you, you could all compete in a foursome on a level playing field on any set of tees on a given course. How does that work?

What's a golf index for?

There are two reasons for a golf index. The main reason is to provide a way for golfers of different abilities to play and compete on a relatively even basis at any course. A secondary reason is to provide a rating system that indicates a golfer's ability relative to other golfers.

Another real benefit of the USGA's golf index is that it is portable. Using your USGA Index, you can go to any course which has a course rating and a slope rating and calculate your handicap for that specific course and set of tees.

Our Handicap System software calculates your USGA Index as well as course handicaps and keeps track of your scoring history.

How to calculate a USGA Handicap Index

Calculating your USGA Handicap Index is not high math, but it can be high hassle. You definitely want to find software to do it for you. The math involves addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, rounding and truncating...none of which will stump you. You can try our free handicap calculator.

Calculating it one time is not a hassle. Maintaining and updating it for one or more players definitely becomes a hassle. You must keep track of hole-by-hole gross scores, adjust those using Equitable Stroke Control, calculate a handicap differential for each score, pick the best differentials out of the most recent scores, average the best, reduce that by a percentage and truncate. That sounds like a job for someone else or a computer!

***(6) Golf course handicap calculator - what's my course handicap?**

Did you know that your golf handicap may be different from course to course? If you use the USGA system, this is true. The USGA provides a formula with which you first can calculate a number that is the same no matter what course you play. This number is called the "Index." Using this Index, you can calculate a second number - your golf "course handicap" - for any specific course. The USGA has a handy golf course handicap calculator so you don't have to do the calculation. But you will have to know your Index in order to use it. Alternatively, you can use the following formula to calculate your course handicap:

Course Handicap = Handicap Index x Slope Rating / 113

The course handicap is really a handicap for a specific set of tees on a specific course or what someone might call a "playing handicap."

The USGA defines a course handicap in its Handicap Manual as...

A "Course Handicap" is the USGA's mark that indicates the number of handicap 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. For a player with a plus Course Handicap, it is the number of handicap strokes a player gives to adjust the player's scoring ability to the level of scratch or zero-handicap golf. A Course Handicap is determined by applying the player's Handicap Index to a Course Handicap Table or Course Handicap Formula. (See Section 10-4.) A player's Course Handicap is expressed as a whole number. The result of any conditions of the competition, handicap allowance, or competition from a different USGA Course Rating that changes a Course Handicap is considered to be the Course Handicap.

So you have a course handicap that is specific to a set of tees at a certain course as well as an Index that is the same number from course to course. An approved golf club can provide you with a USGA Index which you need in order to calculate your course handicap.

Por: **Adrián Garza**

Comité de Handicaps

Club de Golf Tierra Dorada