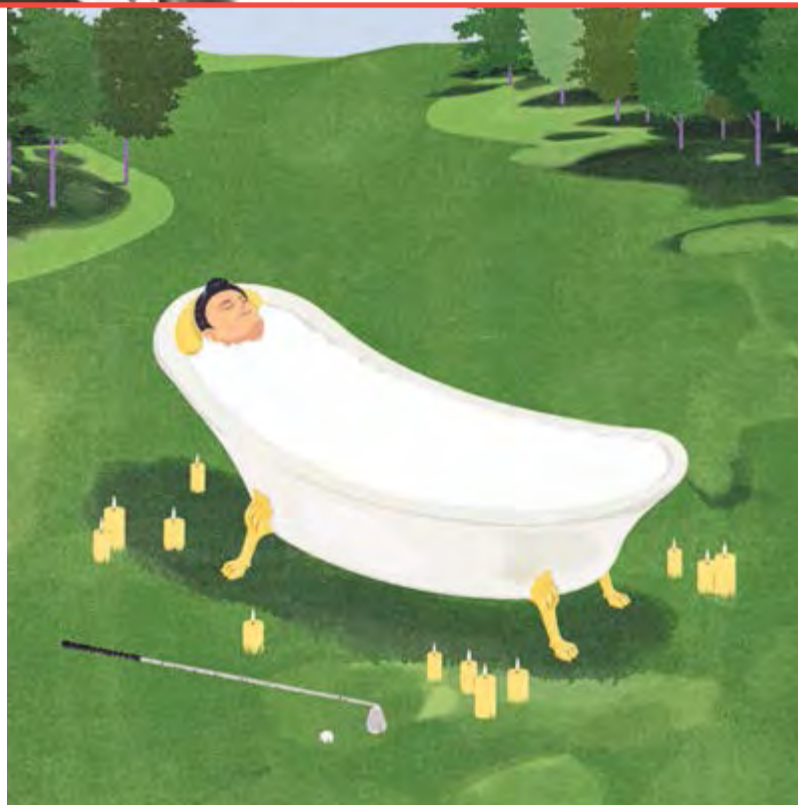




BY
TOM WATSON



STRESS RELIEF

WHEN YOU'RE FEELING NERVOUS,
SLOOOOW DOWN

Ben Hogan once told me that he got so nervous playing in a tournament, he felt like he was jumping out of his skin. That confirmed to me that we all get jittery from time to time, whether it's you, me, or the great Ben Hogan.

The feeling you get is the anxiety of being in competition and failing.

So how should you deal with it? What helped me the most early in my career, when I wasn't keeping my composure at the end of big rounds, was a tip from Byron Nelson.

He told me when I was under pressure to walk a beat slower.

I was walking too fast, and rushing my decision-making and my swing.

When I slowed down between shots, my swing rhythm improved, and so did my results.

Let me give you one more tip: Visualise a player with a smooth swing, and try to emulate him or her.

Sam Snead had the most beautiful rhythm I ever saw, and I liked to picture his swing when the heat was on.

I had that visual in mind because I'd watched him hit balls a lot.

It really helped me keep cool. — with Nick Seitz



'YOU'VE NO DOUBT HEARD THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE DEEP BREATHS TO EASE TENSION. LEE TREVINO TOOK IT A STEP FURTHER. HE LIKED TO YAWN DELIBERATELY TO FORCE MORE AIR INTO HIS LUNGS. YOU'RE PROBABLY YAWNING NOW FROM THE POWER OF SUGGESTION.'

Tom Watson is a Golf Digest Playing Editor.