Target areas or full-length holes for driving range progress

When planning a driving range, the choice of target areas shapes how golfers improve and how the facility operates. The decision between dedicated target greens and full-length simulated holes influences everything from player engagement to maintenance demands. Each approach offers distinct advantages, and the right fit depends on the facility's goals, space, and typical user base.

Target greens are the classic driving range feature. These are flat or slightly contoured areas, often with a flag or cup at a set distance, that give golfers a clear aim point. They work well for practicing distance control and accuracy within a specific yardage. A player can work on hitting the same spot repeatedly, which builds consistency. For a facility that serves beginners or recreational golfers, target greens provide a straightforward, low-pressure environment. The golfer focuses on ball flight and landing zone precision without the distraction of a complex layout.

Full-length simulated holes take practice closer to real course conditions. These areas incorporate multiple target greens at varying distances, sometimes with fairway-like roughs or bunker features. They allow a golfer to play a "hole" from the tee box through the approach. This setup better prepares players for the transitions they encounter on a real course: adjusting club selection, managing different lies, and handling changes in elevation. For more experienced golfers or those preparing for competition, full-length holes offer a more realistic training tool.

Space and investment considerations

Available land is a primary factor. Target greens can fit into narrower or irregularly shaped parcels. A facility with limited width can still offer several target greens at different distances, often stacked side by side. This arrangement makes efficient use of depth, as the same area can serve multiple hitting bays. For a site that needs to maximize the number of practice stations per acre, target greens are a space-efficient choice.

Full-length holes require more depth and often more total acreage. They need room for the tee line, the landing zone, and the area beyond the target for safety spacing. A single full-length hole might need 200 to 300 yards of depth. If the property has generous dimensions and the budget allows for more earthmoving and turf work, full-length holes create a premium practice experience. They also demand more sophisticated irrigation and drainage planning to maintain consistent playing conditions across varied terrain.

Investment in driving range construction should balance upfront costs with long-term operational expenses. Target greens are generally simpler to construct and maintain. They involve less grading and fewer drainage features, and the turf can be a single type across the landing area. Full-length holes require more detailed site assessment and grading to create fairway contours, bunker faces, and target surfaces that drain well. The irrigation system must handle multiple zones with different water needs. The maintenance team will need more specialized equipment for mowing and rolling the varied surfaces.



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Player circulation and facility capacity

How players move through the facility affects both enjoyment and throughput. Target greens arranged in a straight line with hitting bays directly opposite create a clear, simple circulation pattern. A golfer picks a bay, selects a target, and hits. There is little need to walk or reposition. This layout can handle a high volume of players, especially during busy times. The facility capacity is largely determined by the number of hitting bays, and each bay can serve multiple players rotating in and out.

Full-length holes often require a different circulation approach. Golfers may start at one end and work their way toward the far target, or they might use a cart path to move between tee boxes positioned at different points along the hole. This can reduce the number of simultaneous users compared to a target-green layout of similar size. However, it can increase the time each player spends on the range, which may be desirable for a practice-oriented facility that wants longer sessions.

Safety spacing and range orientation

Safety spacing is a critical part of any driving range design. The distance between hitting bays, between bays and target areas, and from the target area to any adjacent property lines or public areas must be calculated carefully. Target greens allow for relatively tight spacing because the ball flight is predictable and the landing zone is a single, defined area. The range orientation can be straight or slightly angled, and the safety netting or fencing can be designed to catch errant shots within a small footprint.

Full-length holes introduce more complexity. The ball flight can vary with different club selections and player skill levels. The landing zone spreads over a larger area, and the risk of balls landing in unintended spots increases. The facility must account for the longest possible shot from each tee box. This often means wider safety margins, more extensive netting, or a

buffer of rough terrain around the landing area. The range orientation might need to be adjusted to avoid sun glare at certain times of day, which can affect player comfort and safety.

Player engagement and training value

Target greens are excellent for focused repetition. A golfer who wants to dial in a specific distance or work on a particular swing flaw can do so without distraction. The target gives immediate feedback on accuracy. For a facility that offers lessons or coaching, target greens allow the instructor to stand near the bay and watch the ball flight without walking far.

Full-length holes add variety and progression. A player can practice approach shots, fairway management, and even some short-game skills if the design includes a putting surface. This variety keeps practice sessions engaging for longer periods. For a facility that wants to attract regulars who are serious about improvement, full-length holes offer a clear path to track progress. The golfer can measure improvement not just by hitting a target but by playing a simulated hole in fewer strokes or with better consistency.

When each approach suits best

Target greens are a strong choice when the facility is focused on volume, simplicity, or space constraints. They work well for a public range that sees high turnover, for driving ranges attached to a retail or entertainment venue, or for facilities where the primary goal is to offer a straightforward practice option. They also suit facilities that want to minimize ongoing maintenance costs.

Full-length holes are better suited to facilities with a dedicated practice culture, such as a golf academy, a private club, or a high-end public range. They also make sense when the property has ample room and the budget supports more complex construction and maintenance. The investment in tee line construction for full-length holes is higher, but the payoff in player satisfaction and differentiation can be substantial. A well-designed full-length hole can become a signature feature that sets a facility apart.



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Some facilities combine both approaches. They dedicate part of the range to target greens for warm-up, lessons, or quick practice, while reserving another section for full-length holes that offer a more immersive experience. This hybrid model can serve a wider range of players and maximize the use of the property. The key is to plan the driving range construction so that the two areas do not interfere with each other, especially regarding safety spacing and player circulation.

When evaluating options, a facility manager should consider the typical golfer's skill level, the expected daily traffic, and the long-term vision for the property. A site assessment that maps out sun angles, prevailing wind, and drainage patterns will help determine which layout is feasible. The choice between target greens and full-length holes is not one-size-fits-all. It depends on balancing the facility's goals with the practical realities of the land.

Ultimately, the best driving range design is the one that gets golfers to return. If the range helps them see improvement and enjoy their time, it succeeds. Whether the focus is on repetition or realism, the construction process should prioritize quality. The **tee line construction** must be level, well-drained, and durable to withstand heavy use. The target areas should be clearly marked and maintained so that feedback is reliable. When these fundamentals are in place, the range becomes a tool for genuine progress.