

Valuable Book Group, LLC
Specialists in Rare and Antiquarian Golf Books
Newsletter and Book Review for the Serious Collector

The Greatest Selling Golf Books of All Time

What is the greatest selling golf book of all time? We were curious on this question recently so did some un-scientific research to find out. Getting accurate information from publishers proved difficult so we did some research the old fashioned way. We looked on-line for golf books with the greatest number of used copies for sale as a rough proxy to the number of books published. The results based on these rankings are listed below:

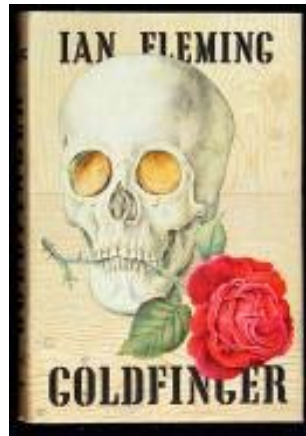
Book	Author	First Published
1. <i>Goldfinger</i>	Ian Fleming	1959
2. <i>Harvey Penick's Little Red Book</i> ¹	Harvey Penick	1992
3. <i>Murder on the Links</i>	Agatha Christie	1923
4. <i>Golf My Way</i> ²	Jack Nicklaus	1974
5. <i>And If You Play Golf You're My Friend</i>	Harvey Penick	1993
6. <i>Chicken Soup for the Golfers Soul</i>	Jack Canfield	1999
7. <i>Golf in the Kingdom</i> ³	Michael Murphy	1972
8. <i>Golf Dreams</i>	John Updike	1996
9. <i>Clicking of Cuthbert</i>	P.G. Wodehouse	1922
10. <i>The Golf Omnibus</i>	P.G. Wodehouse	1973
11. <i>Five Lessons: The Modern Fundamentals of Golf</i>	Ben Hogan	1957
12. <i>How I Play Golf</i>	Tiger Woods	2001
13. <i>Down the Fairway</i>	Bobby Jones	1927
14. <i>Golf is not a game of Perfect</i>	Bob Rotella	1995
15. <i>Haunted Major</i>	Robert Marshall	1902

What does the list tell us about golfers? Two things, we think: First, that we like fiction. Six of the top fifteen are mysteries or fictional books. While we know it's a stretch to include *Goldfinger* and *Murder on the Links* on the list since they have a minimal amount of golf content, we still count them because the major golf book bibliographies such as Donovan & Jerris catalog them as such.

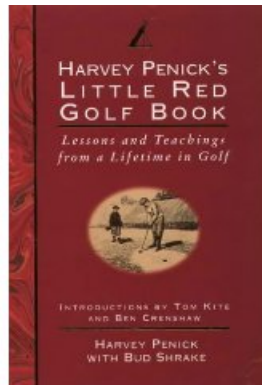
¹ Wikipedia says it is the most popular golf book ever published. Bob Thomas refers to 3 ½ million copies having been published.

² Simon and Schuster says it has sold more than 2 million copies since being published in 1974

³ Publisher reports more than one million copies sold



The second thing it tells us is that we need a lot of help in both our golf swing and with psychology. Seven of the top fifteen books relate to instruction or managing the mental side of the game. This shouldn't be a surprise. Some of the best selling non-golf books are self-help or weight-loss books. You need to be an optimist to play this game and we all hope there is a secret around the corner to magically take a couple of strokes off our game.



Although it didn't make the rankings, an honorable mention goes to Harry Vardon's *How to Play Golf*, originally published in 1912. The book was issued in more than nineteen separate editions through 1926 alone, and in more than twenty-five total editions counting modern reprints, making it one of the most popular instruction books of all time.

If you have additional information on popular golf titles, please share it with us.