

Hireko Golf's Acer XK clubs: Solid equipment for this soft economy



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Let's cut right to the chase: It's not only a bad time to need your 401(K), it's a bad time to need new golf clubs. I can't help with your [retirement plans](#), but I can help with the new clubs.

Or rather, **Hireko Golf** can help.

Never heard of Hireko? Well, the company has been around since 1980, offering components and assembled clubs that have built a strong following in Asia and [North America](#). Over the past several years, Hireko has added well-known lines like Acer, Pal Joey and, more recently, the highly-respected Dynacraft. Hireko's various lines present golfers solid clubs that are affordable even in this soft [economy](#).

Acer XK driver, fairway woods, hybrids and irons

We took the new and improved Acer line of clubs out to our local practice range and put them to the test under difficult conditions, hitting directly into a 30-mph headwind.

The Acer XK Titanium driver (\$100 assembled, 10.5 degrees, stiff Aldila NV shaft) sounded a bit hollow (as many 460cc drivers do these days), but produced a ball [flight](#) that was perfect for the conditions: low, piercing trajectory with a slight draw that held its line into the gale. On-center contact was rewarded with a soft, effortless feel and great distance. Off-center contact, though harsher in sound and feel, also produced acceptably long, fairly straight shots.

The Acer XK 3+ wood (\$50 assembled, 13 degrees) and 3-hybrid (\$45 assembled, 19 degrees), also with Aldila NV shafts, were equally impressive. Considering that big-name companies can charge as much as \$250 each for these types of utility clubs - which most golfers don't use all that often - the Hireko sticks are a bargain.

The hybrid did a particularly good job of getting the ball up into the air from a variety of lies, and well-struck shots ended up just about as far out on the range as they did with the fairway wood, which had a bit lower trajectory.

The Acer XK irons come in both standard and pro models (\$25 per club, assembled), and of all the clubs tested, the XK Pro was the biggest stand-out. The design incorporates player-improvement features such as a cavity back and slight offset, but the clubhead itself is more compact than the standard model. Even into such a strong wind, I was able to hit both low and high shots, with both a draw and a fade. Shots struck on the sweet spot were nearly as buttery soft as with many more expensive irons.

The Acer XK Standard irons feature a deeper cavity back, greater offset, larger clubhead and thicker top line. Designed to get the ball up into the air faster, these were particularly difficult to hit into a severe headwind, as the ball simply ballooned and fell straight down about 15 yards shorter than with the XK Pros. For high-handicappers under normal conditions, though, these irons would be well worth a look as an alternative to big-name sets costing hundreds more.

Hireko Golf's Dynacraft Prophet ICT driver

The picture for all the Hireko clubs we tested was not quite so rosy. The Dynacraft Prophet ICT driver (\$120 assembled) features an adjustable hosel. These adjustable clubheads are all the rage these days, but as far as I'm concerned the jury is still out as to whether golfers really want to mess around with face angle and loft from round to round.

Troubles with the Prophet arose right out of the box, when I couldn't for the life of me loosen the screw on the bottom of the clubhead with the small wrench provided. (Also, forget "Lefty loosey, righty tighty" - the Prophet's screw is the opposite.) I had to use a pair of pliers to grab the wrench and really crank on it to loosen the screw. Then, after adjusting the clubhead, I tightened the screw as tightly as I could and headed to the range.

On my first swing the clubhead clanked terribly and came loose, and I feared that the head would fly off and hit someone behind me. The clubhead stayed attached, but it was loose again and could not be tightened further with the small wrench. If a player were on the course and this happened, it would be he, rather than the clubhead, that would be screwed.

The verdict on Hireko Golf's Acer XK and Dynacraft Prophet ICT

If you're looking for a set of clubs that will perform better than your 401(K) (and will likely hold their value better too), Hireko is worth a look. And you can save even more [money](#) by buying the component parts and assembling them yourself.

The Acer XK line is solid from top to bottom, though if you are looking for a higher ball flight I would recommend picking a higher loft on your XK driver than you might think you need.

As for the Dynacraft Prophet ICT adjustable head driver, I think the verdict is still out. Jeff Summit, technical director of Hireko Golf, tells me that the company is in the process of obtaining a new wrench to be sent with the driver, as apparently I am not the only one to have trouble with it.

If you have your heart set on one of these adjustable drivers, the \$120 price tag is far less than big-name competitors. Just make sure to request one of the new wrenches when they get in.

For more information, visit www.hirekogolf.com.

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Kiel Christianson has lived, worked, traveled and golfed extensively on three continents. As senior writer and equipment editor for WorldGolf.com, he has reviewed courses, [resorts](#), and golf academies from [California](#) to Ireland. Read [his golf blog here](#).

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