



CHAPTER 7

Putting



Putting forms the basis of Greg Cullen's golf instruction. The putting green is where his lessons begin and it is the very place where you should spend a lot of time.

A whole round of golf consists of 18 holes. At two putts per hole, that adds up to 36 putts per round. If you're a good putter, you've already won half the battle.



Did you know?

Putting makes up roughly 43% of your game.

Roll it in

A putt is the only shot in which the ball is not meant to fly through the air, but to roll on the ground.

Practice: Make the ball roll!

Practice balls have a line printed across them. Place the ball in front of you so that the line is visible from above. Now, stand parallel to this line and try to make the ball roll with your putter.

Watch the ball. If it rolls perfectly you will see a straight line. If the ball wobbles, in other words if the black line moves back and forth, then give it another try. Keep repeating until you get it exactly right!





The putting grip

There are many different grips you can use. Greg recommends the reverse-overlap grip.

Reverse-overlap grip:

This is just like the overlapping grip only the index finger of your left hand overlaps the one on your right. Of course, it's the other way around for left-handers.



Did you know?

A lot of golfers prefer to take their glove off when chipping or putting in order to have more feeling in their fingertips.





Pick something up with your hand. If there are other players with you, pass it around. Which fingers did you use to take it?

Your thumb and index finger, right? The index finger and thumb are the most important fingers on your hand when picking up things.

The most important thing to consider in your grip is that these two fingers are in contact with the club shaft. So, relax and let's go!



The pendulum

Imagine that you are a big, old grandfather clock. Your head and your lower body are perfectly still. Your arms and the putter are

the pendulum and swing back and forth smoothly and steadily.

This is the whole secret to putting. Your arms swing easily back and forth while the rest of your body remains still.



Did you know?
Why are there special grips just for putting?

The aim of all of these grips is to ensure that you don't move your wrists. The only really important thing is that your thumb and index finger are on the shaft.



Your hands only serve to connect your arms to the putter, they don't do anything else.

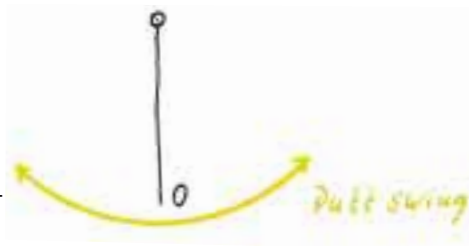
Where should the ball be?

Logically, the ball should be in the middle of the swing of the pendulum, in other words right in front of your feet.



As a rule, however, when you hold the putter, your right hand is farther down on the grip.

If you are now standing comfortably, your right shoulder will be somewhat lower than your left. Your shoulders are at a slight angle to the ground, not parallel.



The lowest point of the pendulum is shifted slightly to the left. The ball is, therefore, also located somewhat to the left. The ball, which is the lowest point in the swing of the pendulum, should be almost directly across from your left heel. For left-handers, this is, of course, the other way around.

Practice makes perfect, so let's get out to the putting green:



Practice #1:

Develop your feel for distance!

Play several balls differently. Play the first ball, then play the second one a shorter distance, the third one somewhat longer than the first. Play the fourth ball between the first and the third, and the fifth ball between the first and the second ones.

You can play this with several players. Whoever makes the shot moves on to the next round.



Practice #2:

Finding your comfort zone

Place five piles of balls, each a little farther from the hole. Each pile should consist of four balls. Begin about 25 cm away from the hole. The last pile should be about 2 meters away.

Now try to putt each of the four balls in a pile, sinking each in the hole with one putt. When you have managed this, then you can move on to the next round.

In case one ball misses, then you have to go back to the first level. Just as in the game of “Chutes and Ladders,” you must go back.

Not so easy, is it?

Usually, the first and second levels are pretty easy.

We call this the comfort zone. It is the distance from which you can always sink your ball easily.

But by the third level, you really begin to struggle and the ball often misses its target.

The fact that you must struggle also shows that this exercise isn't as easy as it first seemed. In the first two levels, you putt confidently and the ball seems to find the way by itself. By the third level, however, you really need to concentrate and you tense up.

So remember, always try to keep your cool and stay relaxed!!!

Ask a centipede which leg he'll use next, and he's sure to trip up.





Practice #3:

Develop your feel for direction

Place eight balls at about 25 cm in a circle around the hole, in other words, eight times the same distance from eight different directions.

When you have sunk all eight balls, then place a new circle of balls one club-length farther from the hole. Sink the balls and make yet another larger circle and begin again.

Marking the ball

It could be that your ball is close to the line of putt of another player on the green. If so, you should mark the ball and pick it up until it is your turn. You can use a ball marker or a small coin which you place behind the ball. If your ball lies directly in the putt line, then move it to the side one length of the clubhead.



But make sure you don't forget to return the ball to its original spot afterwards!

Reading the green – Doing your homework



Go behind the ball and look towards the hole. Usually, you will find that the green is uneven, sometimes even a little hilly.

Did you know?

You may mark the ball on the green and pick it up to clean it. When you return the ball, make sure that the lettering on it is lined up with the hole. This helps you putt in the right direction.

As a result, your ball doesn't always roll straight, but will sometimes change direction at certain points on the green.

These points are called **breaks**. If you are putting uphill, use more force; if putting downhill, use less.

Pretty obvious, huh?

Divide the stretch between the ball and the hole into sections and figure out how the ball will roll.

Then aim for the spot at which you assume the ball will change direction. Your ball will do the rest.



Are you “left-eyed” or “right-eyed”?

You can observe some really strange behavior by other players on the putting green. A player will sometimes hold up his club in front of his eyes and then stare in the direction of the hole.

He will, then, swing the hanging club, at the same time blinking his eyes hard.

What is going on here?



Did you know?

A break is a point on the green where the ball changes direction while rolling. If possible, try to read the green looking uphill, so that you don't underestimate the breaks.

This is a method of determining the direction of the hole and the slant of the green, in other words, to figure out if the ball will roll straight or if it will curve up or down while rolling.



This “blinking“ can sometimes be very useful. Swing the club in front of your eyes so that it forms a line between the hole and the ball.

Did you know?

Do not step into the line of putt of other players. Your footprints can affect the roll of the ball.

Now, take an even closer look at this line.

Here it is very important to blink with the correct eye.

Just like every person is either right- or left-handed, either his right or left eye is also more dominant. This is the eye that your brain relies on more.



There is a simple test you can use to find out whether you are “right-eyed“ or “left-eyed.”

Test:

With both eyes, look at something a short distance from you. Now, hold up your thumb in front of it.

You will see your thumb and the object blurred together at the same time. Go ahead and give it a try.



Now, close your left eye and look at the object with just your right. If the object is covered over by your thumb, then you are “right-eyed.”

When you look at the object with only your left eye, it seems to jump right out at you. It appears to be to the right of your thumb. For “left-eyed” players, of course, this is the other way around.





From now on, focus on this dominant eye when swinging your putter.

“Right-eyed” persons close their left eye,
“left-eyed” persons close the right one.

