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Golf Tips: How To Putt

By Michael Hamilton

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Plumb Bobbing!

The rule of thumb when judging a break, and the size of the break, is to use plumb bobbing. Yes, that's a real word (or words!)

First, you need to find your dominant eye. Make a circle with your thumb and forefinger, and with both eyes open, place an object in the middle (i.e. a lamp, a flag, a picture, etc). Now alternately close the left eye, and the right. Whichever eye "keeps" the object in the middle is your dominant eye.

Now, take this to the golf course. Line up your putter, hanging freely, behind your ball so that it matches up with the flag pin. With your dominant eye open, you will see that the ball is to the left, right, or straight on. Straight on, no break. If to the left, the putt will generally break right to left. Conversely, it will break left to right if the pin is to the right. The distance between the ball and pin/hole is GENERALLY the amount of break.

This is not an exact science, but it will help you immensely if you can't read greens at all (like me).

A handy little gadget to practice your putting when you are not on the course is a homemade putting tool. Rather than explain in detail, click here to see how \$5.00 in hardware store parts will greatly enhance your putting, and how you can use it anywhere!!. It's a GREAT tool. (I would actually give it to you, but my purchase does not allow for free distribution. I believe it sells for \$3 or \$4.00

EYES WIDE SHUT

An great way in which to perfect your putting stroke is to practice with your eyes shut. This drill will shift your attention away from the mechanics of the stroke and force you to concentrate on feel. The urge to lift your head too soon to see where the ball is going will vanish. The net result will be less anxiety on putts of all distances.

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Practice this drill:

Hit a series of 10-foot putts with your eyes closed. Make sure you are settled in correctly. Then, simply concentrate on hitting the putt solidly with an accelerating motion on the forward stroke, utilizing an ultra-smooth stroke (see tip below on how to get that!)

Remember, the goal is to two putt. One putting is icing on the cake. Always think of a two foot perimeter around the hole. If you are 15 feet or further away, try to sink in one, but ultimately, the best course of action for a weekend golfer is to shoot within that two foot perimeter.

The secrets to judging speed and break

This is one of the toughest parts of the golf game to improve...and usually it takes practice and experience to make any significant change. However, there are some things you can do to help you improve your consistency on the greens and help you to sink more putts.

First, keep the following in your mind when judging your putts or chips.

1. Examine the "Grain:" The term 'grain' is simply the direction in which the grass grows.

This can be determined by looking for the 'shine' or 'sheen' of the putting surface.

When the green reflects the sun and appears brighter, you are looking down grain.

Putts down grain, or with the grain, will run faster.

Another method of determining grain is to stroke your putter in the fringe just off the putting surface (make sure you are on the fringe and not on the actual green).

Fringe grass usually has the same grain as the green.

2. Read the Contour: When walking to the green, study the general slope of the land.

Remember, most greens are built higher at the back and lower toward the front. This will definitely impact how you play a shot on the green...or even as you approach the green.

When you are putting from the front of the green (assuming that it slopes downward from back to front), the putt will be uphill. When you are putting from the back, downhill.

Any putt across such a green will usually break toward the front lower portion of the surface.

These are simply good "general" rules to keep in mind as you approach the green.

Now, think about these 2 elements (Contour and Grain) together.

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- Putts running with the grain will tend to "run" faster.
- When you are putting cross-slope and your putts are running with the grain they will break more.
- And likewise, if you are putting cross-slope against the grain, your putt with break less.
- When you putt against the grain...give it a little "more." Your putts will tend to run slower so you may leave it short more often if you aren't careful.
- When you putt downhill, with the grain, you putts will not only run faster but they will break more.
- And the opposite is also true. If you are putting uphill, against the grain, expect your putts to run slower and break less.

By keeping these very simple "rules" in mind and reading the greens as you approach you should be able to improve your consistency on the greens and sink more putts.

Plus, everyone knows...you drive for show and putt for dough.

Michael Hamilton is an accomplished golfer, and editor of GolfTips Weekly Newsletter. His newest book can be found at: <http://www.free-golf-tip.com/golfebook.htm> His sites include: <http://www.breaking90.com> <http://www.free-golf-tip.com>

Golf Tips On When To Chip Versus Putting

By George Gabriel

Playing a chip shot from the fringe of a green versus putting through the fringe can be a little confusing for the average golfer. A lot of golfers choose to putt for the fear of not being able to control the distance of a chip shot around a green, and lets not talk about choking a chip shot. More often than not the confidence lies in the ability to putt the ball. When do you decide to chip instead of putt?

A quick review of some your options will help in the decision process. The circumstances have to be right to putt the ball. Here are some golf tips to consider and several situations to help your decision on choosing to chip the golf ball rather than electing to putt.

You may want to chip in these circumstances.

(1)Wet grass or thick grass.

The moisture or thickness of the grass is going to slow up the ball considerably, therefore weight of putt has to be determined to get it through the grass, and once you get it rolling on the green, the weight of putt it took you to get it through the fringe may not be enough or too much distance for the golf hole. In this circumstance there is too much weight control to consider.

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(2) A very wet or slow green.

Chipping the golf ball will take a lot of moisture out of play, and a slow green forces you to swing harder with a putter to get the golf ball up to the hole, when the art of putting should call for a soft touch.

(3) Long grass and uphill to the hole.

You have to hit it harder to get it through the grass with a putter and up to the hole. Eliminate the chance of getting the golf ball caught up in the grass by chipping out and over.

(4) Over 7 feet of grass between golf ball and start of green, and hole is beyond center of green.

Chipping over the grass will eliminate slowing the golf ball up if you have a lot of green to work with.

(5) Hole is beyond center of green and more than 20 feet.

The odds are higher on getting the golf ball beyond 20 feet with a chipper versus a putter.

(6) Sprinkler system directly in front of line to golf hole or other obstacle that will affect the roll of golf ball.

Eliminate possible deflection of golf ball by chipping over the obstacle.

(7) Too much rolling terrain in the first 1/3 distance to the hole.

Taking most of the rolling green out of play by chipping over will give you a lot less rolling green to read unless you are very good at reading greens.

You have the ultimate decision on your ability to play any one of these golf club selections in these circumstances, but there is a good reason to think about these circumstances before you choose the club. I hope some of these golf tips will help in your decision process, and your goal to save strokes.

Tee Times

– Started playing golf and learned the game as a caddie back in the mid-sixties.



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