



BALANCE & BELIEVE™  
GOLF ACADEMY

PUTTING SKILLS ASSESSMENT

Before you start with the drills take a skills assessment of your current ability. This will give you a starting point for measuring improvement.

\*Stroke (10) putts at each station

*Flat & Straight putts	Both Hands	Left Handed	Right Handed
30' - # of balls within 3' circle			
20' - # of balls within 3' circle			
15' - # of balls within 2' circle			
10' - # of putts made			
6' - # of putts made			
3' - # of putts made			

Flat & Straight Totals			
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\*Right to Left

30' - # of balls within 3' circle			
20' - # of balls within 3' circle			
15' - # of balls within 2' circle			
10' - # of putts made			
6' - # of putts made			
3' - # of putts made			

Right to Left Totals			
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\*Left to Right putts

30' - # of balls within 3' circle			
20' - # of balls within 3' circle			
15' - # of balls within 2' circle			
10' - # of putts made			
6' - # of putts made			
3' - # of putts made			

Left to Right Totals			
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Overall Totals			
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Player notes:

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PUTTING - SKILLS ASSESSMENT Continued...

How do I feel about my putting as a whole?

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Where do I need the most improvement?

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I would rate myself \_\_\_\_\_ (1 – 5 with 5 being highest) my overall putting ability and why?

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From what distance do I feel most comfortable with putting lag putts and why?

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Which breaking putts do I feel most comfortable with and why?

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Am I more confident hitting putts uphill or downhill and why?

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Am I more comfortable hitting putts right handed or left handed or with both hands and why?

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## BALANCE & BELIEVE™

### Mental Putting Strategies

The best mental tool you can bring to putting is *awareness*. Know yourself and know what you do when you are playing your best golf. Use the information below to start to build your awareness; then make changes as you need for your personal style of putting.

The mental side of golf is key in helping you maximize your game. Four important ingredients for playing good golf are centered, confidence, commitment, and comfort zone. What will it take for you to bring these aspects to your putting game?

First, become familiar with the concepts and how they are defined.

**Centered** is being in the moment, calibrated mentally emotionally to the task at hand. This is mindfulness. Being centered in putting involves knowing that the absolute, and only point of focus, is this putt. This means not tallying your score just prior to hitting. This means not wondering IF you will make it. This means not looking ahead to the next hole and knowing you can shave a stroke in case you miss this putt. Instead, centeredness is being aware of where your focus is and knowing that the present moment, NOW, this shot, this putt, is all there is. That is mental toughness! That is mindfulness. That is being centered.

**Confidence** might be defined as mentally and emotionally believing in yourself. You believe you have the ability to do well. Every golfer experiences self doubt but learning to manage this and build your own self worth is important to playing and putting well and competing at your highest level.

**Commitment** is the process of making a decision and following through with it. This can apply to the whole game of golf and to one specific shot or putt. It means when you have doubt, you know to enough to step back, get comfortable and then re-commit to a decision or putt. Pia Nilsson and Lynn Marriott in their book *Play Your Best Golf* refer to this as "Think Box Play Box." Once you line up your shot and make mental decisions, you cross a mental line into the play box. Your thinking should be done and you should be free to play. The only task is to hit. The thinking part is done.

**Comfort Zone** is your personal mental and emotional place of optimal readiness. This means you are managing your anxiety or emotions to be in your personal zone that allows you to putt your best. Some golfers need to decrease their anxiety to putt well. Some need to know how to channel up their competitive energy to putt better. This is all about knowing yourself and your emotions to play your best.

Second, apply have some mental techniques that allow you to make the four C's come alive on the putting green.

### **1. Self-talk or self-dialogue \*Primary**

Every person has a personal dialogue in their head every day. This continues onto the golf course and greens. You need to become aware how to manage this dialogue so it best serves you. This is more than just think positive. much more. If you really understand how to self-dialogue than the other techniques will naturally follow. There is no substitute for physical practice and knowing the mechanics of the putting game. But the way you talk yourself through practice and competing can enhance your practice and game or detract from it. Don't underestimate the mental component of putting; instead, know about it, use it wisely and see your putting game improve.

So Why Care about Thoughts and Putting?

- Most people who over think, or who have too much internal chatter, tend to choke.
- When you over analyze you run the risk of making the process too complicated
- If you are a person who does better at practice compared to competing than chances are high that your internal dialogue is a factor, such as what you are telling yourself about pressure or being embarrassed, etc.
- Learning to have a few key words and keeping your internal dialogue simple is associated with better play. This helps your intuitive, natural abilities to come out.

### So What Should I Think: Types of Thoughts

Your thoughts are like traffic lights and can be labeled red, green or yellow as a means to understanding how they influence you.

Thoughts that are critical of you and your play can be thought of as red. These thoughts equate your play with you as a person. For example, "I missed that, so I really am crappy." "Why do I even play golf?" "I'm not good at anything." "I can't play with people who talk too much." "I'm not good with people who are too quiet." "These thoughts are like hurdles. You can play, but it makes the job harder and stops you from doing your best. They can decrease confidence and add pressure.

Some thoughts are more "Green" and help you go in the direction you want. These thoughts are typically more positive and supportive. "Keep going," "I can do this" and "bring on the challenge." "I can focus on myself and not someone else."

Thoughts that are more neutral might be considered to fall in the yellow category. These are more instructional and also are not about evaluating yourself as good or bad. These thoughts are VERY helpful to get you to green (positive) and more in the zone of optimal putting. Learn these words and make them part of your putting game. These might include "I am looking for the line" and "watch the club hit the ball." "Follow through". "One shot, one focus." These are simple, action oriented thoughts. They tell

your brain what to focus on and can be more helpful than, “think positive” because they direct your mind. And it is best to direct it to one task, not many.

Let’s look at an example”

You are about to putt for a birdie:

**Red** thought: “If I don’t make this putt.....then.....” If you are saying this to yourself you are going down a slippery mental slope. What do you first imagine? A missed shot! Then there’s the added pressure that starts with your words. Pressure feelings can translate to tension. Tension can mean tight grip, fast back swing, etc. Your mind (words) and actions are connected.

**Green** thought: “I like this situation.” “I can do this.” “I’m good under pressure.” Imagine the different reactions you might have emotionally and mentally using these green thoughts as compared to the red. What do you notice? These thoughts help your mind be where your body is. This is KEY.

**Yellow** thought: “Follow my pre shot routine.” “Just get a line”. “Focus on the ball.” Some people might consider these green or positive thoughts. Thinking of them as neutral or action can be more helpful. These are instructions or actions and these thoughts take good and bad thinking out of the decision. This also helps to decrease an “in your head argument” about positive thoughts. If you think positive, but don’t really believe the thought then this is not that helpful. You need to be honest and believe your own self talk. This would be like a coach telling you something useful rather than telling you just what you want to hear.

Start by evaluating yourself. Rate yourself on a scale of 1-5 with 5 meaning you do well with this mental strategy:

#### *Self Talk Assessment Questions*

1. I have some helpful words to use to help me focus when putting. \_\_\_\_
2. I know how to help myself manage my thinking if I am getting ahead of myself. \_\_\_\_
3. I know what it means to think neutral rather than negative while putting. \_\_\_\_
4. I know what to do when I start “over thinking or over talking in my head” prior to putting. \_\_\_\_

If you are scoring low on these items it might be important for you to learn more about self talk or inner dialogue as part of your mental game.

#### **2. Pre-shot routine**

Most golfers have some type of physical routine prior to putting. The routine might include reading the green, a certain number of practice strokes, and proper body alignment prior to taking a putt. This routine also has mental components and golfers would be wise to be aware of this. All golfers do some

type of mental talk as they prepare to putt. If it was only physical alignment and reading the line then more golfers would be having a better putting game. Ask yourself the following:

1. Do I have the same pace or rhythm when putting each hole
2. Do I practice and play using the same routine?
3. Does my routine speed up or slow down depending on how well I am doing?
4. Can I allow myself to reset or redo my routine if I have doubt in my mind?

Having the same routine in practice and when competing is very important. The old saying “practice the way you play” applies to putting and even pre shot routines. Too many golfers alter their routines when competing. Sometimes the routines become more complicated or some become too fast or slow and thus, change the swing in some way. The more consistent you can become, the better you might putt. Golfers can put a lot more mental pressure on themselves when putting. This is associated with physical pressure or tension. This tension can alter grip or pace and this affects the shot. If you start to notice your grip changing chances are your self dialogue is also changing. Remember, the physical and mental game are connected.

A good exercise is to practice putting with your grip really tight, really loose, and some place in the middle. Take 10 practice shots of all three. Find the grip that is best for you. Anchor this with a word or short phrase such as “good grip”. In your pre putt routine commit to consistently using your preferred grip and your anchor word(s). Anchor words help fill space and keep you from over thinking sometimes.

### **3. The Quiet Eye technique**

The Quiet Eye technique is a good for practicing being Centered and Committed while putting. The technique involves looking at the intended target (hole) two or three times and then shifting one’s gaze to look at the back of the ball for two or three seconds, and then letting one’s gaze stay for a second or two, even after the ball has been hit. The technique is being researched by scientists at the University of Exeter. The idea behind the technique is to take in only necessary visual information needed for the putt. This is good practice for being mindful and staying centered. Practice this technique from all different lengths on the green.

### **4. Breathing and Putting**

Learning to use breath and using breathing techniques to manage stress while putting is invaluable. When golfers experience tension it might be related to holding one’s breath or not breathing rhythmically. Under duress or stress golfer sometimes grip tighter. But did you know you can also hold your breath or “grip your breath” so to speak? The smart golfer will learn to be aware of the importance of not holding your breath and not taking constant short breaths. Many golfers have been taught to breathe deep or breathe from your abdomen area. A technique now being recommended is heart breathing. In the book, *Transforming Stress* (by Doc Chilre and Deborah Rozman), heart breathing is described as a process where one imagines breath as being inhaled from the heart region and then exhaled from the heart region. This allows for a moment of awareness to deepen ones breath and in this way to evoke the relaxation response. Consider practicing the following steps:

1. Prior to hitting a putt inhale.
2. Then imagine exhaling through your heart using a steady rhythm. You can do this while keeping your eye on the back of the ball.
3. Hit the ball at the end of the exhale or when the breath is complete.

Learning breath work is vital because it is the bridge between mind and body. Have you ever been very excited or very nervous and felt your heart beating fast? Have you ever wanted to slow your pace to help manage this feeling? Breath is the tool that can help. Breathing slower or deeper on purpose can help calm a golfer while putting, if this is needed. Good breathing also affects oxygen and blood flow. This will help you think better!

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Questions contact:

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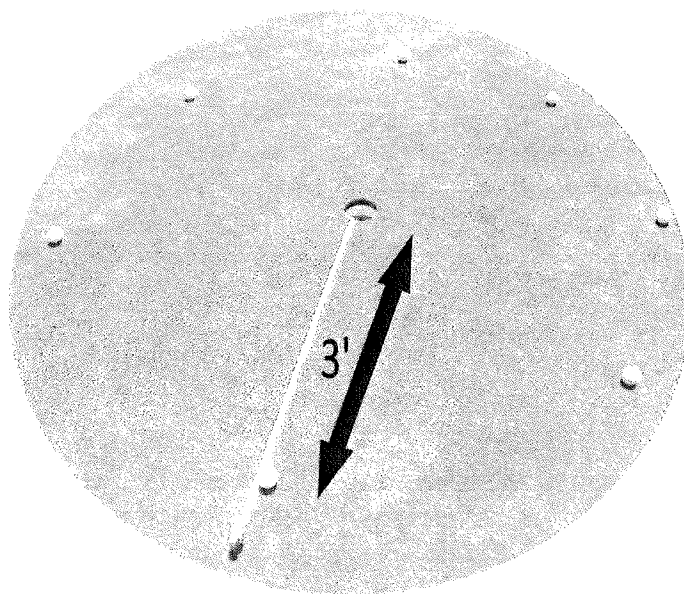
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BALANCE & BELIEVE™  
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Putting Drill

“Circle Drill”



**Supplies needed:**

1. Putter
2. Tape Measure
3. 6-10 balls and tees
4. Marker (Sharpie)

**Drill Set-up:** (see picture above)

Also, take out your sharpie and draw a straight line on your ball – this will assist you in lining up your putt on the desired starting line.

**The Drill:**

Start with any ball you desire, if you make it move on to the next ball. Continue for duration of balls. Here is the catch\* If you make the first ball and miss the second, start completely over. In order to complete the drill you have to make every ball in a row.

Once you have completed the drill at 3’ move out to 4’, then 5’, then 6’, etc. Repeat the same process at every distance.

**The Reason:**

1. Teaches you to have a square clubface at impact
2. Teaches patience
3. Builds confidence
4. Provides preparation for pressure situations on the course
5. Gives you 6-10 putts with different perspectives on the hole

**Tips for success:**

1. Read the green for every putt
2. Take your time and line up each putt
3. Go through your pre-shot routine for every putt
4. Putt with confidence

This drill is very simple yet extremely important to the development of a consistent stroke.

Here is an area for you to take some notes about your practice sessions with this drill.

Remind yourself what it takes to be successful.

**Player notes:**

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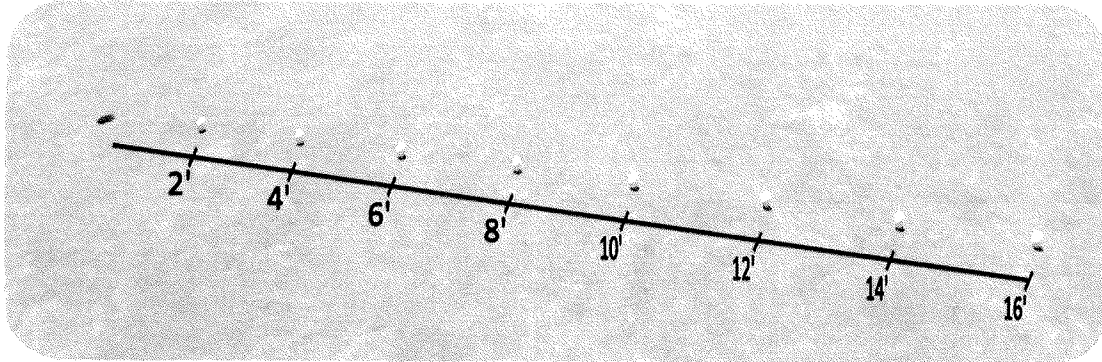
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BALANCE & BELIEVE™  
GOLF ACADEMY

Putting Drill

“Ladder Drill”



**Supplies needed:**

1. Putter
2. Tape Measure
3. 6-10 balls and tees
4. Marker (Sharpie)

**Drill Set-up:** (see picture above)

Also, take out your sharpie and draw a straight line on your ball – this will assist you in lining up your putt on the desired starting line.

**The Drill:**

Start with the closest ball to the hole, make it and then move on. This is the same concept as the “circle drill” in that if you miss you have to start over.

Start with 6 balls at 2' increments and once you can complete the drill then move to more balls or increase your distance between balls. Example; 3' – 6' – 9' – 12' – 15' – 18'

**The Reason:**

1. It will help you realize the starting paths are different as you get farther away from the hole (if it's not a perfectly straight putt)
2. Teaches patience
3. Builds confidence
4. Provides preparation for pressure situations on the course

**Tips for success:**

1. Read the green for every putt
2. Take your time and line up each putt
3. Go through your pre-shot routine for every putt
4. Putt with confidence

This drill is very simple yet extremely important to the development of a consistent stroke.

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**Player notes:**

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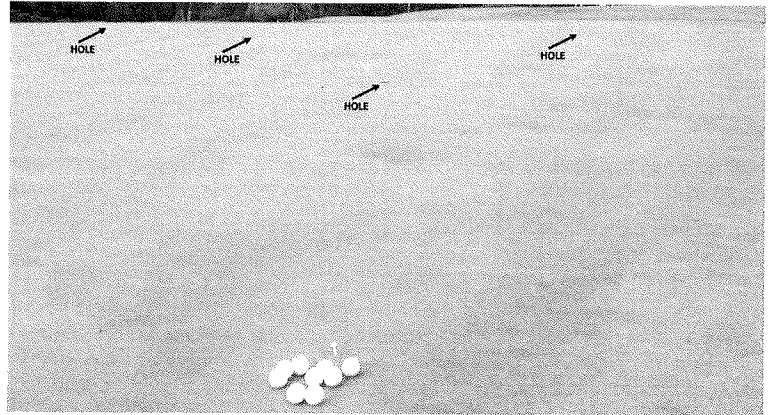
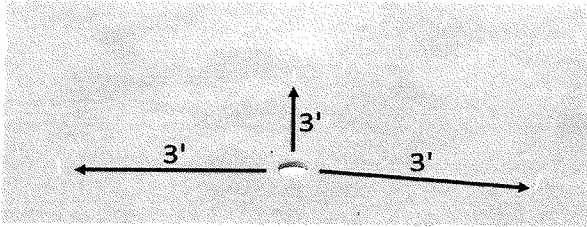




BALANCE & BELIEVE™  
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Putting Drill

“Lag Drill”



**Supplies Needed:**

1. Putter
2. Tape measure
3. 10-15 balls
4. Putting green with 4+ holes
5. Tees – 3 per hole (12 tees for a 4 hole putting green)

**Drill Set-up:**

1. Find a location near the edge of the putting green that you can visually see each hole and pile your balls there.
2. Take your tape measure and measure a 3’ semi-circle around each of the holes, put one tee on each side of the hole at that 3’ mark and also one behind the hole at same distance. (do this to insure the putt gets to the hole)

**The Drill:**

Hit one ball to the first hole you choose, if you make it to the hole and keep it within the semi-circle move to the next hole. You cannot move to the next hole until you complete the task. The goal is to only have to hit one putt to each hole, this would be a win.

After you have completed the first round move your pile of balls to another part of the putting green and repeat the process.

**Skill Level Development:**

Once you can move around the putting green consistently making it into the 3’ semi-circle go to a 2’ semi-circle, then 1’. If you ever get there you are a highly skilled putter of the golf ball.

**The Reason:**

To hit putts at different lengths, different breaks and with different slopes in the same session. The idea is to develop touch and feel no matter what the situation is. And by not allowing yourself to move on to the next hole until you complete the task your inner competitiveness will come alive.

Here is an area for you to take some notes about your practice sessions with this drill.

Remind yourself what it takes to be successful.

**Player notes:**

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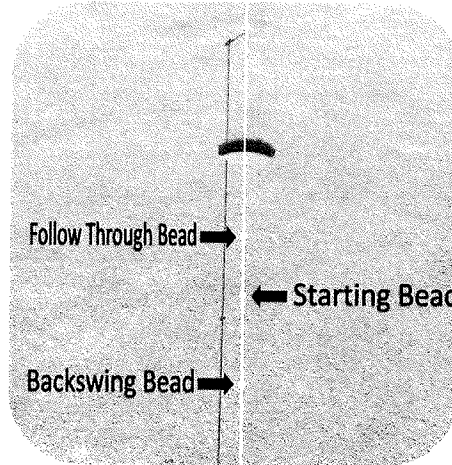
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BALANCE & BELIEVE™  
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Putting Drill

“Bead Drill”



**Supplies needed:**

- 1. Putter
- 2. Knitting needles (2)
- 3. Yarn or String
- 4. Beads (3)
- 5. 2-3 balls

**Drill Set-up:** (see picture above)

Start with a 5’ putt – place the middle bead at that distance.

Now take the backswing bead and place it where you feel you will have to take the putter back for that length of putt.

Finally, take the follow through bead and place it where you feel your follow through will stop on that length of putt.

Depending on your putting path this will all very so to start try having the beads equal distance backward and forward then adjust. We want the head of the putter to only follow through as far as it has to. The function of the backswing is to build enough energy for the entire stroke so you don’t have to add it on the way through.

**The Drill:**

Place the ball under the “starting bead” and make a backswing until you reach the backswing bead. Stroke the putt and stop your putter when it gets to the follow through bead. Adjust accordingly.

**The Reason:**

This will help you build a “solid” stroke by being consistently taking the putter back and through the same way every time

**Main Point:**

Building a consistent effort

Here is an area for you to take some notes about your practice sessions with this drill.

Remind yourself what it takes to be successful.

**Player notes:**

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