

Putting Drills to win your way off the green

I am a big believer in structured putting practice. Everyone is different, but as a general rule I think most players do best with structured times for Block Practice, Random Practice and then need to do drills to “Win their way off the green.” A general guideline would look something like this

Block Practice- 10-20% of your practice time. Block practice is using aides and guides. Putting arcs, chalk lines, eyeline mirrors, beelines etc. You should be using these guides to work on path, alignment, stroke length, tempo, ball position and the like. Basically it is practice with toys to work on stroke mechanics. People love block practice because it is easy, the success rate is high and the environment is fixed. This is also why it bears no resemblance to real golf.

Random and Variable Training- 20-30% of your practice time. In random practice you should be using one ball and constantly changing your environment. You are working on line, speed and making sure you go through your full mental process each time. Also getting feedback as you putt, on if our are needing the most wok on line, speed or read so you know what drills to work on next. The goal here is to learn to preform actions you did in block practice subconsciously on putts that change in distance, break and more.

Competitive training games should make up the remaining 50-60% of your practice time. This simulates on course pressure and helps translate and measure where you stand. If you can complete a certain number of the below games you have won your way off the green and your practice is done. I have seen students done in 15 minutes, and I have sent students home still not complete after two hours. In my opinion putting is nothing more than a compilation of simple skills and if they are all in place there is no reason to practice anymore. However if a skill is not up to snuff, you need to keep working on it. A highly skilled player I may require they complete four of the following drills with at least two in the area they are struggling with. An intermediate player may only be asked to complete two.

The following stats from the PGA Tour in 2017
Looking at each weekly event on schedule

Distance of Putt	Make % of top 10	Make % Rest of field	Difference
3-5 Feet	93%	88%	5%
5-10 Feet	70%	57%	13%
10-15 Feet	40%	27%	13%
15-20 Feet	18%	17%	1%

Remember or goal in putting is to not 3 putt from 25 feet and out and gain strokes on the field from 5-15 feet. The chart above should show you why. The following drills are designed to help you do just this. Please see chart at the back for more information on make percentages if you are interested.

SPEED DRILLS

5 Foot speed drill

Find an old cup that has been replaced on the putting green. Put a tee in the ground 14 inches behind the old cup. Putt a ball from 3 feet, then 4, then 5, then 6 then 7 feet getting all balls to stop between the old cup and the tee. Repeat from 3 feet to 7 feet again and once you get 10 in a row between the cup and the tee you are done.

Short-Medium-Long

Place a ball approximately 20 feet, another 30 feet and a last one 40 feet from the hole. Lag each ball an score as follows,

Hole Out-3 points
Within 3 feet past hole- 2 points
Within 3 feet short of hole- 1 point
More than 3 feet from hole- 0 points

Change holes on green and repeat 6 times for a total of 18 putts, a winning score for a competitive golfer is 23 points or more.

Big Foot

Start with ten balls and lay a ball down 3 feet from any hole on the practice green. Continue dropping balls at 3 feet increments on a straight line away from the hole. Go through your process and putt each ball, starting with the three footer keeping track of your makes and what distance they were. At the end, total up your total distance of putts made. A perfect score is 165 (3+6+9+12+15+18+21+24+27+30)
Your goal is to set a personal scoring record every time you do the drill.

5 Ball Mix Up

Place 5 balls 5 feet from a hole on a relatively straight putt
The first putt must go in the right edge or lip out right
The second putt must go in the left edge or lip out left
The third putt must go in the back center of the hole with lots of speed
The fourth putt should barely topple in the front center
The fifth putt should go in the center on perfect speed

Once you hit the five putts in order perfectly the challenge is complete

The Box drill

Find a hole and create a box behind it using four tees on the corners. The hole should be centered directly in front of the 18 inch box. Take 5 balls 15 feet away from the hole and putt them. Once you have rolled 5 consecutive putts either in the hole or in the box you are done. If you miss at any point in the five putts, pick them up and start again.

Moneyball

Find a relatively flat putt and put a tee down 15, 25 and 35 feet from the hole. Create a box like the Box Drill above beyond the hole. Roll 3 balls from 15 feet and try to get one in the hole or the box. Roll 3 balls from 25 feet and try to get one in the hole or the box. Now from 35 feet roll three putts plus one extra ball (the money ball) and try to get one in the hole or the box. If you fail at any distance you fail you must start over.

SIMULATING PLAYING DRILLS

30 for 30

This drill requires one ball. Find a cup and go 10 paces away from it, approximately 30 feet. Put the ball down and go through your routine and putt to the hole. If you two putt it is worth one point, a one putt is worth two points and 3 putts or worse are worth zero points. Keep score as follows, 1 through 1, 5 through 4, 9 through 9 etc. Keep changing holes, angles, breaks and he like. There are NO gimmies and each putt you must go through your routine. At about putt 20 this gets draining just like a round of golf, that is why it is good practice. If you can get 30 points for 30 holes you have completed the challenge and you are a very good putter.

North-South-East-West

Place 4 balls on the green each three feet from the cup, in a circle pattern at North, South, East and West. Using your full process (pre putt routine) attempt to hole each putt, keeping track of your makes and misses. Repeat the process at four feet, five feet and six feet for a total of 16 putts. Try to make 14 of the 16 putts to complete the challenge.

18 in a row before you go

Please find a relatively straight simple 3 foot putt and put a mark down, going through your routine every time you must make 18 in a row. If you miss start all over again. Mental training here as much as physical. Putts 12-18 are tough mentally.

5 Ball 25

Mark putts at 5 feet, 10 feet, 15 feet, 20 feet and 25 feet from the hole. Place one ball at 5 feet, 2 at 10 feet, 3 at 15 feet, 4 at 20 feet and 5 at 25 feet. Your goal is to make one putt from each distance. As soon as you fail to make a putt from a required distance, start again from 5 feet.

Drawback

Select a putt 20-25 feet from a hole. Hit a putt and if it finishes within the ***grip length*** of your putter from the hole simply tap it in. If it is not within the grip length, move the ball one full length of the putter further away from the hole and putt again. Your score for the hole is how many putts you took and try to play nine holes in a score of 17 or less. It's not as easy as it sounds.

Three in a Row

Take three balls and place them 6-7 feet from the hole. Once you have made three in a row find a 25 foot putt and putt the three balls to the hole. Once all three of these balls come to rest either in the hole or **within one putter length of the hole and past the hole** you are done.

START LINE DRILLS

The Hurricane Drill

You will need 10 Balls for this drill. Try to find a hole that has some break around it, somewhere between 1-2 degrees of slope is perfect. Set up to a hole with a ball 3 feet away from the hole at 3:00 and at 9:00, Then 4 feet at 4:00 and 10:00, 5 feet at 5:00 and 11:00, 6 feet at 7:00 and 1:00 and 7 feet at 8:00 and 2:00. Make 8 out of the 10 putts and you are done. Miss a third putt start all over.

Three Hole Gate

With 5 balls in hand pick a hole 18-25 feet away with some break. Take two tees (dimes if putting indoors) and make a gate approximately the width of a putter head representing a starting line you must putt through in the first 1/3 of the putt to hole the putt. Then roll 5 balls and see if you can hole a putt by moving it through the gate to get there. You may move the gate mid process. If you make one of the 5 putts, move on to another hole. Once you have completed 3 holes you are done.

25 foot Dime

Place a tee in the green 25 feet away from a starting point. Put a dime on the green 5-6 feet from the starting point. Try to roll 5 straight balls that get to the tee 25 feet away and hit the dime as a start line. Once you have hit the dime and gotten at or past the tee with 5 consecutive putts you are done.

Tee Drill

Put a tee in the ground and place 5 balls 5 feet away from the tee. When you can hit the tee with 5 consecutive putts you have completed the challenge.

One Putt & 3 Putt probability on PGA Tour from 2003-2012 (over 4,000,000 putts)

Distance of Putt	1 putt probability	3 putt probability	Average Putts
2 feet	99%	0%	1.01
3 feet	96%	.1%	1.04
4 feet	88%	.3%	1.13
5 feet	77%	.4%	1.23
6 feet	66%	.4%	1.34
7 feet	58%	.5%	1.42
8 feet	50%	.6%	1.50
9 feet	45%	.7%	1.56
10 feet	40%	.7%	1.61
15 feet	23%	1.3%	1.78
20 feet	15%	2.2%	1.87
30 feet	7%	5.0%	1.98
40 feet	4%	10.0%	2.06
50 feet	3%	17.0%	2.14
60 feet	2%	23.0%	2.21
90 feet	1%	41.0%	2.40