



The Mental Art of Putting: Accessing Your Putting Potential

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The putter is the most important club in your bag. It's the club that you use more often than any other club. A hot putter is what makes a champion. The physical aspects of putting look simple, but every player knows that putting is more than just a physical task. The mechanics of putting must work in combination with a player's visual skills, powers of imagination, and level of confidence. The mental art of putting is the true challenge in putting. Putting, more than the long game, is a test of a player's emotional stability and patience.

The human factor is what makes putting so challenging. Our emotions, feelings, and thoughts are what brings a new dimension to a simple physical task. Just a bit of tension or fear can throw off the best of strokes. A flicker of doubt can cause a golfer to be tentative or steer the stroke. Trying too hard to make a putt can cause a player to tense up and leave a putt three feet short of the hole. And when not putting well, players search for "the secret" to making putts. These players switch to a new putter, change their technique, or alter their putting routine. What they don't understand is that the secret to making putts is inside them. You have to start with the belief that you have putting potential. This is the first step in using your mind to putt your best. Using your mind to putt your best also includes believing in your putting skills, using your imagination, focusing on execution, and having a positive attitude about putting.

In our new book, *The Mental Art of Putting: Using Your Mind to Putt Your Best*, we discuss what all great putters do and how you can access your putting ability. The following are six of the most important keys to using your mind to putt your best:

1. **A Positive Attitude and Approach.** Good putters love to putt. They don't fear this aspect of the game. You can't putt well if you go into a round wondering if you are going to putt poorly today. Take a positive approach and challenge yourself to putt well today.
2. **High Putting Confidence.** Confidence means believing in your skills, and in putting you must have conviction that you can make putts. Confidence comes from practice, making putts on the course, developing your touch, and believing in your ability. Confidence is a mindset that says "I

can do this."

3. **Strong Sense of Touch.** One of the most important skills to have is the ability to control your speed. Most three-putts are caused by poor distance control. Your touch also influences the line you select. The line you select depends on "pace." When you select a line for a breaking putt, you must dial in the right speed or the putt won't hold its line. So touch is important for both distance control and hitting your lines.
4. **An Execution Focus.** The goal is to make putts. All golfers know this, but you can't focus on making or missing. You have to focus on the ingredients of the task that will help you make putts such as reading the green, selecting a line, aiming to a target, and allowing your instincts to take over. If you do these well, you have a good chance of making putts.
5. **Strong Imagination and Good Vision.** Putting is a visual task that requires strong imagination. You must be able to read greens and also "see" or "feel" your line. Your imagination allows you to predict the line of your putt, given a certain pace, that your ball must travel on to go in the hole. The better you can see the breaks and "see" the line, the more putts you will make.
6. **The Ability to Trust Your Stroke.** Once you have a consistent stroke, putting becomes a visual and mental task. You practice "stroke" so you can focus on your line and speed when you play on the course. If you become too "stroke bound" on the course, you will most likely steer your putts and not be able to focus on speed or line. Let your instincts take over when it comes to your stroke and focus on hitting your line with the right pace.

Everybody has had a great putting round or a stretch of holes in which they putted well. Think back to when you had a great putting round. What was your attitude like that day? What was your focus like? Were you allowing your instincts to take over? What thoughts and feelings helped you to putt your best? Most likely, this is the mindset you need to putt your best. The secret to great putting is within you. Now you have to tap into it and access your putting genius.

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