



Face The Facts: Make More Putts in 2024

Last Summer, I had many of my students participate in what I simply refer to as 'the 10-putt challenge'. All the putts were three to four feet in length, each with varying amounts of break and level of slope. None of the putts were overly difficult, but matched what they would see in a normal round of golf.

Here are the facts: Professional Golfer: 99% made; Scratch Golfer: 95%; 5-10 Handicap: 88%; 12-18 Handicap: 65%; 20-36 Handicap: 40%.

So what does it all mean? If you would like to lower your scores or handicap, it could be as easy as making a few more short putts per round!

Here are the results. What I found was the higher handicap players missed more putts for two main reasons:

1. They did not line the putter face correctly to their intended read or starting spot.
2. They did not return the putter face at impact to what they had at address.

The lower the handicap, the better they were at these two important skills needed for short putting.

You will probably never be able to hit a 350-yard drive like Rory or hit 15 greens in a round like a Tour player, *but* you do have the ability to make as many three to four foot putts as they do if you practice and improve these two skills. You need to *face the facts!*

These drills can be practiced indoors or out on a putting green.

Practice Drill 1

Aim the face. It sounds simple but the worse you are at putting, the harder it is. I like my students to use training aids like putting mirrors or yard sticks to work on this skill. Place the ball on the starting dot or hole in the yard stick and get your putter face square or parallel to the line on the board or the end of the ruler. One thing you can check is your posture and make sure you are bending from your hips to get the putter on the ground. If you do this correctly your eyes will be directly over the top of the ball or slightly inside the ball. We never want to see eyes positioned outside the golf ball at address. This setup will help you see the square face. Once you get into a square putter face setup, study the putter face and without lifting your body, turn your head and let your eyes look at the hole for a few seconds and then return them back to the golf ball. Step away and repeat this process five to ten times. The more often you do it the quicker you will train your eyes.

Practice Drill 2

Once you have a better understanding of correctly aiming the face, you need to practice returning the face back to

that same spot at impact. Take two irons from your bag or alignment sticks out and place them on the green or floor just outside the width of your putter head. Place a ball in the middle of the sticks and make strokes with just your trail hand first. For a three or four foot putt, the putter head will move in a relatively straight back and forth path. After ten strokes with just the trail hand, use both hands and do the same ten strokes keeping the putter head inside the rails. After 20 practice strokes, place a ball marker or coin two feet (roughly the length of your putter without the grip) away from the ball. You can now hit putts seeing if you can roll your ball over the coin. If you can execute this every time, you will have your putter aimed and returning to square every time.

Practice Drill 3

Lock Your Legs. On short putts, it is critical to keep your body still. There is a strong correlation between body movement and putter face movement. Practice putts with a focus on stable legs. For some it might be a good feeling to place a ball in between your thighs and squeeze it during the stroke. I like my students to feel like their feet and legs are cemented into the ground before they

make a short putt. This feeling will also help when putting in windy conditions.

Practice Drill 4

Now that you have perfected the skill of aiming the face and keeping the face square at impact, it's time to take it on the course. You don't want to have a lot of thoughts going through your head when playing, so *trust your practice*. Get your aim and put your focus on one dimple. One of the ways people move their putter face is when they look at the hole to see the result. It is hard on short putts because the hole is in your peripheral view and it's easy to cheat. When your eyes move to the hole early the putter face or path changes and you see the ball missing the hole. I like to color one dimple of my ball and all my focus is on that dimple at address and keep my eyes on that spot until I hear the ball falling into the cup.

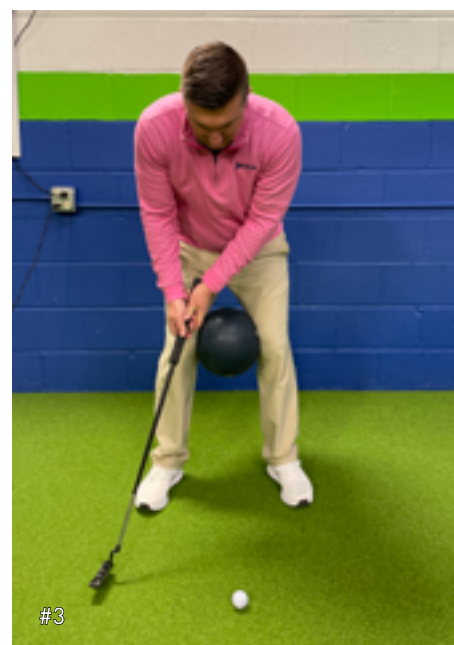
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#1



#2



#3



#4

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Located right off of Interstate 55 in Channahon, IL, The Bluffs, also known as Heritage Bluffs Golf Club, offers both a challenge and composure across its rolling acres. With scenic beauty unlike most Chicago-area courses, The Bluffs is a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary and has received a 4-Star rating from Golf Digest Magazine.

In addition to an award-winning course, The Bluffs also features a large all-grass practice range, putting green, separate chipping green and bunker, and a newly renovated clubhouse.

The clubhouse is open 7 days a week and features a full dining room and bar as well as indoor golf simulators for year round fun!

