

Recommended Putting Routine: After the assessment of the topography of the putt, the player stands immediately behind the ball to determine the distance to the hole. (Again for emphasis, I did not say how hard to hit the ball since I believe that is determined by the putting dynamic signature and the length of the back stroke as in Appendix 5.) The player is immediately behind with the ball between himself and the intended target. The player may stand perpendicular to the target line as shown below.



Practicing the stroke near the distance of the anticipated putt length standing perpendicular to the intended path.

This position just behind the ball allows the player to look down the line as well as appreciating the distance of the putt. The illustration below gives another view of this position in space.



A gopher's view (not the golfer's) of practicing from behind the ball with player at 90° to the intended line and near to place in space the same as the length of the putt. The photograph on the left shows the back stroke and the one on the right the forward stroke. The player is staring at the hole appreciating the distance and executing the motion anticipated to get the ball into the hole.

An alternative positioning: He may choose to stand parallel to the intended target as in line with it.



This alternate method is to stand behind and practice distance motion in line with the anticipated putt. The photograph on the right shows a shaft along the intended line. The player is in position of subsequent putt.

I contend it is easier for the human body to “read” parallel or a right angle than it is to appreciate some angle like 27° or 36° or anything in between, greater or lesser.

After firmly locking the distance into his mind’s computer file, he closes this file.

He then walks back behind the ball so that he can focus intensely on the target.



I call this the “stare” as the player intensely focuses on the cup. Notice the position of the hand on the putter grip.

The target may be the cup, the edge of the cup or the back of the cup depending upon the read of the slope and stimp. The target may be outside of the cup and or even short of the cup if on a down hill breaking putt. The player continues to focus on the target as a competitive spring board diver would at a spot at the end of the diving board during the approach to the ball. With the target firmly locked in his mind’s hard drive the player places the putter in his dominant hand with thumb on the flat front portion of the grip and the index finger down the side of the putter. This gives the player an alignment read with the most sensitive portion of his hand, the distal (end) of the index finger pad.



The hand is on the putter grip with index down the back and the thumb on top. They are positioned 90° to each other. This also provides a very readable position in space for the golfer as he walks forward to place the putter head behind the ball.

Without changing the position of his hand on the putter grip, the player with his focus intensely on the target walks towards the position where he will take his stance. The reason not to grip and re-grip is to keep the inanimate putter connected to the human source of spatial relationships. I often jokingly say the putter does know where it is in space, but the only reference is the player's constant grip. Further more the gripping and regripping or spinning the putter in your hand would if it were possible confuse the golf club as to where it was and what it was supposed to do. One very famous PGA tour player spins his putter in his hand as he approaches the ball. I have been introduced to him, but do not have a relationship to suggest this practice causes confusion in his body and this habit is deleterious to the best opportunity for perfect aim.



The player walks to the ball while continuing to stare at the intended target.

As the player gets ready to turn to assume a position of address, he immediately looks down so that his last look at the target is from the longitudinal perspective.



The player looks down to spot where the putter will be placed prior to the turn.

The instance that the golfer turns to take his stance, he looks down at the ball and places the putter head behind the ball. The putter head is placed firmly on the grass so it does not move using his approach gripping unchanged.



The same grip is used to set the putter behind the ball. The combination of the thumb on the flat portion with the groove and the index finger extended down the back side gives the player a right angle relationship upon which to place the putter face at the target.

With the putter securely in place the player then takes his stance and changes to his customary grip for putting.



The target is just to the left of the hole in this illustration as the green slopes to the right. In this demonstration the player has not stepped forward to the position of having his head over the ball.

At this point the player confirms the alignment from the striking position. This is best accomplished with the eye directly over the ball and his head and neck in the horizontal position. More specifically the eyes and chin should be in the same plane so that when the head is rotated it is in a horizontal position, looking directly towards the target.



The head assumes the horizontal position so that rotation results in looking down the line.

In practice on the SAMPuttLab or with the PUTTron® the player is encouraged not to confirm, but trust the method. Doing so they are surprised how effective this method is for gaining perfect aim. One European tour player a major champion, facetiously exclaimed “I can aim better not looking”. That is not the method in play. In competition the player confirms the aim with rotation of the horizontal head. If the aim is not to the player’s liking or experience, then they should stop and start over with the entire routine. Adjustments in aim from this body position of 90° angle to the target will produce error as previously compared to shooting ducks with such a method.

If the player believes the confirmation, then he is ready to strike the ball. Please refer back to Chapter 2 on aim to see the testing results of this method.

There are two PGA tour players I have seen in competition who use a similar alignment method. I have not spoken to either about this so as not to “mess” with their mind or play. I hope to have the opportunity if and when it presents itself. Aaron Baddeley and Jim Furyk do something similar to what I have just outlined. Both are good putters. Aaron looks from behind, walks up and places the putter on ground short of the ball. He takes his stance and moves putter head forward. He often does not look again and putts. Jim goes back and forth between his stance and behind the ball. His last move is to back off as if not certain of the direction. He looks again from behind. I do not know if his habit of hiking the trousers from behind in his routine is key to his success, but he does it every time. At some point the opportunity may arise to discuss this matter with them.

I also learned from Duane Anderson, the resident Taylor Made putting expert that Dave Stockton uses a similar approach from behind the ball while focusing on a spot some short distance in front of the ball to establish aim and direction. It is not my intent to in anyway challenge Dave Stockton’s excellent reputation as a putter as that was settled many years ago. However I would question the idea of focusing upon a spot some distance short of the intended length of the putt. Therefore I favor focusing on the spot of the length of the putt.