

Get Your Head on the Grass for Top Putting

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[ZipTip: TARGETING / AIM: Get Your Head on the Grass for Top Putting](#)

To enhance your sense of the putt, simply looking for the line is not enough, and you have to actually pay attention to the grass blades themselves over key segments of the path in order to get a vivid sense of energy and direction for the roll.

For top putting performance, you need to get your consciousness down to the grass blades. This is hard to do from five or six feet up in the air, where your eyes usually are riding, but there are some things you usually do to compensate for this disadvantage and there are some more things you should do as well. In any event, if you don't get right down to the path your ball needs to roll over, you won't be putting with a full deck.

[The Role of Conscious Awareness in Putting Accuracy.](#)

When you target the hole or aim spot in putting, you build up a conscious awareness of the location of the target out in space in relationship to the position and posture of your body. But you can "target" more than just the hole or spot itself -- you can target the exact path of the putt as well. Actually, you don't really have to target the WHOLE path - - just the critical segments of the path. In every putt, the critical segments are always the first few inches of the startline, the break point and the shape of the curve of the path through the break-point area, and the final one to two feet of the path as the ball enters the cup itself. You cannot effectively target these segments of the path unless you get your attention and awareness down to the level of the surface itself.

When the mind's attention and awareness is directed to these segments of the putt path, you are forced to appreciate the whereness of these sections of the path in relation to the surface, to the other sections, and to your body position. Out of this awareness grows an appreciation for the energy or speed of the ball as it will travel over these separate segments, teaching you how the ball will "take the break" or "get there" all the way to the hole. Hence, this awareness instructs your movement-control brain processes not only about the direction and distance to these features of the putt, but also about the energy or force ("weight" as the Brits say) of the putt in order to send the ball along the intended path all the way into the hole. In other words, the perceptions of the putt design the movement of the stroke.

[How to Do This.](#)

Ordinarily, golfers walk up to the hole or the break-point area and "study" the surface a bit. In addition, many golfers crouch behind the ball, shade their eyes, and "study" the path into the hole (perhaps judging break, perhaps just soaking up the shape of the path).

These are valuable techniques that get your awareness down to the level of the surface, but unfortunately they are not coordinated with the critical segments of the putt path.

In order to build up vivid and valuable perceptions about the putt as movement over the surface of the green, you need anchor points on the surface itself that matter. The most important anchor points are the hole and the ball. In breaking putts, there is also the break point, or widest lateral divergence of the intended putt path / curve off a direct line from the ball to the hole. In both breaking putts and straight putts, the final one to two feet of the putt is more important than the breaking point, as this section of path determines the shape of the path through the break-point area.

Viewing the path in reverse, the most important anchors are:

- the hole or aim spot;
- the final entry segment of the path one or two feet in length;
- the path through the break-point area as it curves towards the start point and straightens out;
- a spot some five or six inches out ahead to fix the start line; and
- the ball itself as the putt line meets the front equator in the center of the ball.

To take stock of these features of the putt in a way that best promotes a successful stroke along this path, you need to direct visual attention and awareness down to the grass level as you study these segments. Doing so enhances your appreciation for the putt's speed and the smoothness of the changes in the ball's speed as it nears the cup. It also forces you to think strictly in terms of rolling the ball along this pathway, which promotes good putter-ball impact and a consistent character of ball roll. It is not enough just to look in the direction of the hole or break point or other anchor on the surface; you have to look AT the grass blades actually there while imagining the roll of the ball over these segments of the putt.

[The Primacy of the Final Entry Segment.](#)

Of these anchors for visual and mental attention and awareness, the most important one after the hole is the final entry segment. If you will actually identify the precise spot the ball ought to cross on the lip as it falls into the hole, and combine that with an awareness of the ball's slowing speed at that late point in the putt with your assessment of the surface contour at the hole, you can readily see the shape of the last one or two feet of the pathway for any putt with pretty good accuracy.

EVERY putt ought to have exactly the same speed at the end of the putt, regardless of the length of the putt -- that is your chosen "drop speed" at the hole. (I recommend a slowish end-speed at the rim of about 2-3 revolutions per second, which usually keeps any misses within about 1 foot or less of the hole.) Because of this, you always know the ball's speed over this final segment, and can accurately visualize the ball's reaction to green contour here. This gives you the shape of the final segment.

If you painted a stripe or piece of curvature on the grass out from the entry point on the rim to "fix" this piece of the path in your mind's eye, you will see that it simultaneously represents for you the trajectory on which the ball must emerge through the break-point area and the energy the ball will have at that point in the putt. The management of the ball through the break-point area is entirely secondary to this perception, since the perception of the final segment is HOW you manage the speed through the break point.

Consequently, your task becomes simply to send the ball out along the start line into the break-point area with the proper energy SO THAT it follows the final entry segment into the cup.

Viewing any putt as a problem of delivering the ball into the final one or two feet of the path addresses speed and distance problems in a valuable and accuracy-promoting way while also keeping you focused on the start direction for the putt. This simplifies putting tremendously, since rolling the ball to the break-point area is not really a problem -- the problem is managing the ball's energy through the break-point area. The focus on the final entry segment of the putt's path does this. And you don't get this piece of the path very well unless you get your head down onto the surface with the grass blades.

[Make This Part of Your Game.](#)

Set up to a 10-foot straight putt on the practice green and ignore everything except the final one foot of the path into the hole. Identify the exact blade of grass on the rim the ball should roll over as it drops, and then mentally trace from the rim towards you a segment of the putt about one foot long. See the exact blades of grass on the piece of the green, and commit to delivering the ball to this segment with the right level of speed. Visualize the ball's speed as it rolls on this piece of path and drops. Then set up to a breaking putt, identify the break point in the usual way, and focus on perceiving the final entry path into the hole. Deliver the putt into the break-point area so that the ball "takes the break" correctly and emerges onto the final segment and drops. This tip ought to help sharpen up your distance control on all putts AND make your handling of breaks a lot more precise, with less severe misses high or low. On the course, once you target the hole or aim spot, make sure one of the last things you do is appreciate the way this final entry segment of the putt lays on the surface, so you can deliver the ball correctly into the hole. To get your head into the putt, get your head down to the grass!

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