

# Putting

Considering how many putts are normally hit during a round (even a good round), it surprises me how little most golfers practise this important shot. It is a lot easier to eliminate wasted shots on the green caused by poor putting, than to, say, suddenly find an extra 20 or 30 metres on a drive, or to improve the accuracy of iron shots.

Golfers develop various styles and methods of putting, some of which work, but all too many don't. Again there are fundamentals that should be followed. The ball should be placed forward in the stance, the eyes should be positioned directly above the ball and the weight must, as in chipping, favour the left side (a). Then a pure stroke, with the putterface squared, must be delivered to the back of the ball.

**The putterhead** must accelerate through the stroke, but as with the chip shot, I see many strokes that have a short backswing with an extended follow-through. In attempting to develop a smooth stroke, this long follow-through can wreak havoc with feel and sudden acceleration or quitting can result.

For those golfers struggling with this aspect of the game, I would suggest lengthening the backswing slightly and then executing what feels like a 'jab' with a shortened follow-through.

But it is that left hand and left wrist that ruins many a good stroke and again I stress the value of practising putts with only the right hand (b). That all-important right wrist must maintain its angle (c) and, by spending some time ingraining this feel, there is no doubt that both the direction and distance control of your putts will improve.

Many players have converted to the long putter (d) and it certainly has its merits. But think about it – the principle by which this method operates is to eliminate the left hand altogether – with the right hand doing all the work.

