



The REAL money shot

The trick to being a consistent putter is to practise while focusing on a coin and holding your finish, reckons PGA pro **Derek James**.

The number one mistake you can make when putting is to move your head. If the head moves, the shoulders move, which in turn means the club won't swing on line. This leads to mishits and makes it hard to square the clubhead at impact, causing misdirected putts. All this has negative consequences in terms of consistency when it comes to putting.

The golden rule for putting is that the head must stay still, regardless of whatever else you are working on in your stroke. One of the main reasons for the head moving is that the eyes move too, partly due to our naturally curious nature. They either follow the clubhead or the ball or, heaven forbid, they look at the hole before you hit the ball. This tip will help you remedy that.

A very simple, yet effective drill is to put a coin on the green behind the ball. Obviously you

ABOVE Place a coin behind the ball and take your normal stance. Focus on the coin. Execute your normal stroke, but keep your eyes on the coin at all times.

may not put the coin down when you are playing in a competition, but you can simply focus on a blade of grass instead.

Go through your normal pre-shot routine, whatever that may be. When you are ready to execute the stroke, rest your putter on the coin, then putt without taking your eyes off the coin at any point until the ball has found the hole. This may feel a little strange at first, and for the head movers out there, it will prove to be a challenge initially.

The funny thing about golf is that just as bad habits are easy to develop, good ones are also quick to cultivate. After doing this drill for 20 minutes, three times a week – focusing on the coin

during your stroke while keeping your head still – the process will become more natural. Over time, the hole will become unimportant as the ball takes care of itself.

What you will also notice is that after practising this drill, your ball striking will improve, and therefore so will the roll of the ball on the surface of the green. The result is that it will hold its line better and find the target more often.

The second part of the drill, which is a by-product of maintaining eye contact with the coin, is to hold your finish. Make this a 'must do' habit. If your putter wavers about all over the place, ensure that you stop it by simply holding your finish. You will soon get into a great habit of a solid finish, which will also help with consistency and sinking more putts.

This is one of the simplest, yet most effective golf drills I teach. Go out and try it – you may just be surprised. **CG**



DEREK JAMES is based at Southbroom Golf Club in KwaZulu-Natal, as the director of golf and head pro. His stellar playing career is eclipsed only by his work as one of South Africa's leading teaching professionals, specialising in the short game. **Contact him on 039 316 6051.**

FOR MORE PGA PRO TIPS GO TO
www.compleatgolfer.co.za