

PUTTING

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Have you ever watched a child putt and been amazed at how well they sometimes do? I have seen young children make unbelievably long putts. They don't know any better! They have a free mind, clear of expectations and fears. Experienced golfers know better, we know getting the ball in the hole as soon as possible is the name of the game. We add pressure to ourselves and ultimately our putting stroke.

Want to putt more free-minded like a child? I suggest freeing up your putting stroke. In other words-let your putter swing, like a pendulum. When I think of a pendulum in terms of a putting stroke, I am not suggesting that you must swing the putter straight back and straight through (although this works well for many players). I am suggesting you allow your putter to swing free, under your shoulders, with a nice flow and rhythm. As always, there are several key set up fundamentals which will allow your putter to swing more freely.

1. Balance. Where is the pressure on the bottom of your feet? Weight should be centered, not leaning toward the heels or toes. To feel this, stand on a 2x4 or a pool noodle (hold onto something for balance) with your toes and heels off the ground.
2. Hold. You should place your hands on the handle so that your palms face each other and are parallel to your target line.
3. Hands. Your hands should be hanging under your shoulders. If you are reaching your arms away from your body, your putter has little chance to swing free. Check out your reflection in a full length mirror. See how your arms are hanging.
4. Shoulders. Your shoulders should be set parallel to your target line. Now when you get your putter swinging freely under your shoulders, it will swing along the target line!

If you are having a hard time getting into this position, you may have a putter that is the incorrect length or lie angle.

So now that you are set up correctly, and your putter swings, you can control the distance by controlling the length of your stroke and not trying to hit a longer putt harder and a shorter putt softer. Just find a tempo and rhythm that are easy for you to repeat and you will begin to get the feel for what length stroke you need for certain distances.