

Golf Putting Yips Special Report

Anti-Yips Putting Drills

Practice Drills for Freer Putting

by

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Anti-Yips Putting Drills - Special Report

Introduction

The putting "yips" are one of golf's most perplexing challenges. Golf is not fun when you have the yips at any level. The yips have driven more good golfers to give up the game than any other mental game challenge in golf. When players label themselves as having the yips, they think they have an incurable disease.

When you have the yips, putting confidence suffers because you know it prevents you from playing to your potential. The fear of missing more putts makes matters worse. Players who suffer from the fear of missing don't like to putt. The more they putt, the worse it gets, until it's intolerable. This leads golfers to believe they have an affliction that they must learn to play with. When golfers condition themselves into believing they have the yips, it's extremely hard for change to occur.

The putting yips actually begin with a poor putting round and in some cases missing short putts. Players then progress to the fear of missing putts, which intensifies the fear of putting. Players begin to feel like it's a physical condition; they believe that it can

be corrected with a simple change in technique or buying the newest putter on the market.

But I'm here to tell you the yips start with faulty thinking and not faulty technique or the wrong putter. *Fear, anxiety, and over-control are the culprits that keep you stuck in a vicious cycle of poor and fearful putting!*

Intense anxiety or fear does not allow you to control the stroke and putt smoothly. You freeze and can't draw the putter back from the ball or initiate the putting stroke. Another form of the yips occurs when you tense up and slap at the ball at impact, which is the most common type of yips.

What's the Solution to the Yips?

Over the last 20 years, I've worked with many players who have the yips and have been able to help them. You must improve two aspects of your mental game to beat the putting yips:

- (1) Overcome the fear or anxiety about poor results
- (2) Learn how to practice for freer putting so you can putt on autopilot.

I have no simple answers for the first challenge above because each person is different. The solution is very specific to the person I'm working with. The beliefs that hold you back might be

different from other golfer. In many cases, the fear of embarrassment is at the root cause of the yips. We call this fear of social approval or fear of negative evaluation from others. Bottom line: you worry too much about what will happen in your life when the yips prevents you from playing up to your potential.

If you want help with overcoming the fear, please contact me at 888-742-7225 to explore the coaching options I offer for golfers.

Why Freer Putting?

The second challenge, learn how to practice for freer putting, is a much simpler and straightforward. Thus, practice for freer putting is the topic of this *special report*. Before I reveal my putting drills, I like to discuss my philosophy about why freer putting is so important to your putting success....

When you have the yips in putting, you are not free with your putting--you don't trust the skills you practice. Instead, you over control the putter. This means you're trying too hard to make a good stroke or to avoid a bad result. All of this leads to an overactive mind and overactive muscles.

Thus, part of the solution is to help you learn how to practice for freer putting. This might be a radical change for some players who are used to working on technique, aim, and alignment for most of

their practice. Although important, focusing exclusive on the technical details of putting will keep you stuck in an over-control mindset.

So the goal of my practice putting drills is to help you free up your putter. This means you want work on an automated stroke or natural mindset for putting.

I'd like to share a preliminary practice drill that I do with my students. It's not really a drill per se, it's about making a point for my students at the start of a putting clinic. Here's the task you should try:

Pick a hole that's about 20 to 30 feet away. Do not use your putter. Just grab the ball in your dominant hand, look at the hole, and toss the ball (underhanded) intuitively or naturally to the cup. Don't over think this process--the goal is to use your hand-eye coordination to get the ball to the cup (without trying).

You're probably pretty good with this task. After you attempted this task a couple times, where did the ball end up? Most of my students can get it within two or three feet of the cup without trying. Do you ever practice this task or drill? Most my students would say "no." What allows you to get so close to the hole

without even trying? Your intuitive part of the brain, which I call hand-eye coordination, helps you get the ball close.

My point is you forget to use this part of the brain when putting. How often do you practice throwing golf balls underhanded to the hole? Most likely never. However, how often do you practice with the putter in your hand? A lot I would imagine if you're serious about your golf. Which task should be easier: throwing the ball underhanded or using the putter to hit the ball to the cup?

It should be much easier with your putter based upon the amount of practice that you do. But you make that task too complex for you to engage the intuitive part of your brain that controls your hand-eye coordination. Simply put, you're getting your own way when putting because the mind is in an over active or cognitive state instead of a spontaneous state.

Practice Drills For Freer Putting

The goal of my practice drills is to get you to REACT to that target or your line. Keep in mind that if you're predominately a kinesthetic or feel putter, then you might prefer to feel the target or speed of the putt, instead of see the line or spot for visual putters.

Below are the practice drills for putting I share with my personal coaching students. You should use about 15 minutes per day at the start of your putting practice to complete one to three of the drills below.

Dr. Cohn's Practice Drills to Free up Your Putting

- 1. Hit 4-foot putts with eyes closed** focusing only on a target. Set up to the ball, look at a specific spot on the hole, such as right center, close your eyes after your head comes back and let the putt go without hesitation. Do not focus on your stroke or judge your stroke mechanics during this drill. Trust that the putter will square itself without your intervention or trying to make it happen. Allow the target to drive your putter only. React to the target in your mind's eye when you close your eyes. Hit about 20 or more putts doing this.
- 2. Use the same drill as above, but alternate eyes open and eyes closed.** The goal is to make it feel just as free with your eyes open as when you eyes are closed. When your eyes are open, they tend to dominate. This can cause you to focus too much on the putter head and manipulate the putter. Do not watch the putter head. Your eyes are down, but YOU are not focused on the putter. Instead, only think

about the line, a spot, or target. Hit another 10-20 putts alternating or until putting feels the same with eyes open as with eyes closed.

3. **Tap in Drill:** Put about 5 balls in from the hole at 4-5 feet.

Tap in each ball from four feet (just like you would hit a two inch tap in) as fast as you can by looking at the target and hitting it in the hole. Don't use your regular set up. Use your tap in set up (no set up). Move the balls farther out in one foot increments until you reach 10 feet. Continue to "tap in" the ball from each distance. Next, try to do the same drill with your entire preshot routine first. Feel as if you are tapping in the ball from 10 feet after you do your normal preshot routine.

4. **Look-Set-Go Drill:** Practice hitting putts with a rhythm over the ball. The goal is to suspend the conscious mind while your body takes care of the work. LOOK at the target, SET your head, and GO. Repeat this to yourself out loud until you have developed a good rhythm. Look—Set—Go. Once again, only focus on the target and reacting to the image of the target in your mind.

5. **Try Less Drill.** Hit five putts in a row focusing on trying less and less with each putt. Line up five balls in a row from

about five feet from the cup. You want to think less, take less time, and just react as you get close to the 5th putt. Discover what level of trying you make the most putts with.

With all the above drills, make sure your focus is from the ball to the hole or target, not behind the ball. Don't watch the putter head. You can't care what is happening behind the ball because that's when you start to watch and over control the putter head. You want to focus on the target in your mind's eye—like when you are throwing darts. Look at the target (feel the target or line), return your head to the ball, but still see the target in your mind as you pull the trigger. When you throw darts, you don't think about technique. You only respond to the bulls eye and trust your hand-eye coordination!

Please contact me with your feedback after you have worked on these drills. My email is patrick@peaksports.com.

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