**ZGA Putting Workbook:**

Fastest-Track to Excellent Putting



by

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction

Chapter 1 - Motivational Nuggets

Chapter 2 - General Putting Nuggets

Chapter 3 - Putting Mechanics

Chapter 4 - A New Paradigm

Chapter 5 - Green Reading

Chapter 6 - Practice and Drills

Chapter 7 - Committing Nuggets to Memory

Chapter 8 - The ZGA Putting School

Chapter 9 - About Lee Woodard

Appendix - Video Stroke Evaluation Checklist

Introduction

***You currently have everything it takes to become an excellent putter in a short period of time except for: (1) the proper knowledge base of putting concepts (aka, the proper putting mindset) and (2) the requisite purposeful practice time. This workbook presents material to help fill those two voids.***

The ZGA Putting Workbook increases your putting knowledge base and provides a proven blueprint for the fastest track to excellent putting. With this workbook, a couple hours of ZGA consultation, an increased knowledge base, and an Iphone/Ipad video application; you can 'home-school' improvement of your putting and essentially become your own master instructor.

This workbook contains what used to be secrets that will facilitate an significant improvement in putting regardless of your current level of putting. These secrets soon lead to repeatability, confidence, and mental clarity which are keys to becoming an excellent putter. So you can choose either to follow the well defined steps presented in this workbook to become an excellent putter or continue putting at your current level.

If you want to improve your golf scores, the quickest way is to focus on putting- which amounts to 43% of your strokes. If you are averaging more than 29 putts a round, then gravitate to a more repeatable setup and a more repeatable stroke as described in this workbook to improve your putting. (Note- When counting putts, count shots with a putter from the fringe as a putt as well as a GIR.)

A golfer does not need the size, strength, power, flexibility, and fast-twitch muscles of a touring pro to be an excellent putter. There is no need to spend long hours in the gym or on the driving range. There is no need to be young or any age for that matter. As a matter of fact: with the correct mindset and knowledge base, your putting should improve with age.

This workbook presents a very simple, succinct format of the missing knowledge base of putting with a few pages of putting nuggets to be committed to memory and applied. Also provided is a list of components of purposeful practice. As a young system analyst a half century ago, I quickly learned that all systems were developed, maintained, and verified using short checklists.

I decided to condense 30 years of research and education of putting as well as empirically derived information into short, pithy checklists that provide a fast-track to becoming an excellent putter.

This workbook presents some lists or checklists (some should be memorized) to be used to improve your putting. I have purposely not included anecdotes, background information, justification, and other filler.

The real magic here is that most of the efforts to improving your putting by means of the correct mindset and more repeatable mechanics can be done in your living room, office, or garage.

My mentor, James Sieckmann, states that great putters have the following essential skills:

 1. Start the ball on the intended start line

 2. Strike the ball on the sweet spot

 3. Match the correct line with perfect speed with touch/feel

 4. Strike the ball in the putter's center of mass (not too high or low)

The overall objective/plan is to have a precise, repeatable setup and putt with feel/touch (which is a subconscious effort or habit) after hours of training with correct mechanics (which is a conscious effort). Technique is a means to an end, not an end in itself. A repeatable stroke skill driven by the subconscious mind is the end game.

Chapter 1

Motivational Nuggets

* "Putting is all about controlling the mind." - Nick Faldo
* Announcers stated that Rory McIlroy has been re-tooling for the 2019 Masters by using meditation and juggling to center himself.
* Brad Faxon, who has been working with Rory on putting, said "You might see that his putting technique is a bit better, but we have been focused on making his mind better."
* Absolutely anybody can become an excellent putter.
* To be an excellent putter, one does not have to be young, strong, flexible, powerful, quick, BMI-correct, in-shape, tall, etc. etc. etc.
* With age, we can become better putters. 43% of your shots are putts, so improved putting quickly improves scores.
* You can practice putting without wearing out your body- no real physical effort.
* The putting action is so slow, you can actually watch the path and face angle through impact for feedback in practice.
* Spend your practice time and effort developing the most repeatable putting stroke- but decide on the mechanics of the simplest movement to give yourself the best chance of repeating it.
* Brad Faxon, Steve Stricker, and Loren Roberts don't have the best or prettiest strokes, but their strokes are 100% repeatable.
* Improving putting mechanics can be done in your living room or office.
* The secrets and answers to becoming an excellent putter can be found in proven blueprint presented in this "ZGA Putting Workbook".

Chapter 2

General Putting Nuggets

This collection of putting nuggets will help you develop an effective putting mindset. You should re-read these as often as possible so that they are imprinted in your memory (See Chapter 7). The putting concepts presented are simple, but you must make a concerted effort to learn, to apply, and retain.

Do not take the entire list out on the course. But you can pick out 2-3 nuggets and include those in your 'Doc in Your Pocket' card that you carry with your scorecard or yardage book. I have put 3 dots on my putter to remind me to (1) keep my head still, (2) rock the shoulders, and (3) hold the follow-through.

**The following is a list of the best putting nuggets:**

1. Look for the spot under the ball after impact- NO PEEKING
2. Body lines must be parallel left of the starting line
3. 'Lock-in the Y', rock the shoulders, and hold the follow-through (AKA, maintain your suspension point and hold the follow-through)
4. Lower body should feel like it is in cement- lower body does not move
5. Commit to the process, the read, desired path, desired speed
6. It is better to be certain than to be correct- a fearful stroke is 'jabby'
7. Focus on path, speed, and roll- you cannot control the ball going in
8. Speed is important- visualize the ball stopping 16 inches past the hole if not in the hole
9. Roll the ball on desired start line indicated by the intermediate target
10. The ball is either going to go in or not- it is no big deal either way
11. If you are going to miss the putt ensure that you execute a good stroke
12. Celebrate a successful putt regardless of length
13. Forget putts that do not go in as there are numerous reasons for it
14. Brad Faxon putts his best when it's as if it doesn't matter
15. Watch the other golfers' putts and chip shots
16. Pace off your putt above the putting line to get exact distance
17. The ball does not know the importance of the putt
18. Every putt is the same
19. No worries about outcome
20. Every putt is merely a ball, hole, putt, a strip of grass, and you. Anything else is 'baggage' and adds mental clutter.
21. Mental clarity starts with a focus on the process without distractions
22. Good proximity puts a Pro in contention; to win, he must also putt great

**The following are from Bob Rotella:**

1. Putting well is inside you. Just get out of your own way.
2. The secret to putting is not in the stroke but is in the mind
3. Great putters have a great routine and attitude
4. Putting is all about your mind and attitude
5. Remove any notion of fear to be an excellent putter
6. Putting is fun; learn to love putting
7. Putting is not a complicated stroke
8. Putting is primarily a mental challenge
9. Develop selective amnesia regarding missed putts
10. Replaying missed putts in your brain is like missing again and again...
11. Optimism rules!
12. Free-will helps you to eliminate distractions and pick out a target
13. Touch goes first when you are fearful and doubtful
14. Fear and doubt dictates your behavior and influences your stroke
15. A miss is just a miss- don't let it ignite fear or doubt
16. After a miss, the only constructive action is to forget- and a practice stroke
17. Celebrate even short putts- make it a mild celebration
18. There are 7.7 billion minus 1 people in the world don't care about your putt
19. Brad Faxon putts his best with no mechanical thoughts
20. The stroke must be repeatable: develop a stroke that can be repeated
21. Use a success journal
22. Optimistic thinking frees you from fears/doubts and therefore frees up your stroke
23. Strong putting routine and mindset are your allies on the green
24. A strong mindset is difficult to achieve and easy to lose- that is the reason it must be practiced and maintained
25. Develop a proper mental routine and rely on it under pressure by 'pushing a button' with a trigger like re-velcroing your glove
26. Negative inner talk can generate a self fulfilling prophecy of failure
27. Visualize the ball going into the hole
28. Putt with a carefree attitude of a kid, but maintain a clear focus on the routine
29. Trying too hard creates pressure and tension

Chapter 3

Putting Mechanics

This chapter presents the ZGA Instructor's Checklist. No need to memorize it.

Video Rules! The PGA agree with us in that people cannot learn or teach golf technique without video in every lesson. Master instructors always use video. To learn the proper putting stroke techniques, use an aim-line and a Iphone/Ipad video application like the free Hudl Technique app for down-the-line and face-on views.

The checklist should be reviewed monthly or when you hit a putting slump. Do not take the full checklist to the course. Just put 1-3 key concepts for the day on a 3x5 card. Use the following checklist for your self-teaching:

* Head must be still (chin close to the chest is good) NO PEEKING!!!
* Eyes over the ball
* Arms hang naturally with a slight, natural bend at the elbows
* All the body lines should be parallel left of the starting line
* Thumbs are down the flat side of the grip; palms facing
* Putter face is in middle of stance with the ball directly in front of it
* Shoulders rock, the rest of the body is still- 'lower body is in cement'
* Lock-in the 'Y', rock the shoulders, and hold the follow-through (AKA, maintain the suspension point and hold the follow-through)
* The shoulder rock has some in/out motion not just up/down
* The Y of the arms and shaft is retained throughout the stroke
* The butt of the putter points at sternum throughout the stroke
* Gravity starts the transition and downswing, then shoulders rock
* Putt stroke is symmetric- backswing and follow-through are same distance
* Hold the follow-through to ensure no flipping at the ball
* Putter path is a very slight arc if backswing is greater than 3 inches
* Putter-face is slightly de-lofted on the back swing; loft added past impact
* Putting stroke has a good rhythm throughout- maybe use a metronome
* Let gravity start the transition to the downstroke like a free fall for 2-3 inches

Note: More mechanical putting details can be found on the ZoneGolfers.com website under the PUTTING SCHOOL page/tab.

Chapter 4

A New Paradigm

This chapter was generated for right-handed putters. If you are fortunate enough to putt left-handed, then you are stuck with a simple translation of 'right hand' to 'rear hand' and 'left hand' to 'lead hand'. Sorry about that.

If you are a left-hand low putter and average less than 33 putts a round, then please ignore this chapter.

If you are a left-hand low putter and average more than 32 putts a round or you are a traditional right hand low putter, then please read on. In the former situation, please consider going to the right-hand low putting style for the reasons described later in this chapter. Most people like to use left-hand low style to square up their shoulders. You can square up your shoulders with a right-hand low by merely gripping the putter in the right-hand low style then slowly put your left-hand in the low position to square the shoulders then move it back to the high position without changing your shoulder alignment. Now read on about the new paradigm for right-hand-low players.

Many golfers have had success with the claw or pencil grip on the putter. The general thought is that it takes the 'hit' out of the right hand. Well there is another reason for the claw's success!

The problem with the standard putting grip and stroke is that you have both hands trying to perform two different functions at the same time. The right-hand is trying to suspend the putter off the ground and accurately direct the ball down the starting line. And the left-hand is trying to do the same two tasks: suspend the putter off the ground and accurately direct the ball down the starting line. It is a power struggle between the hands.

The new paradigm is to have the left-hand's sole purpose is to suspend the putter and the right-hand's sole purpose is to accurately stroke the ball down the start line with the correct speed. There is no power play with both hands trying to do the same two things. And for most of us, the left-hand is not as coordinated/accurate as the right-hand but is best suited for merely suspended the putter. Whereas the right-hand is the most coordinated/accurate and is better at providing accuracy and speed control.

That division of responsibilities is exactly what the claw grip does for the golfer.

Next time you practice putting, try delegating the chore of suspension only to the uncoordinated left hand and use the right hand for direction and speed. And practice with the claw grip and note how that grip forces the division of power. And practice with just the left hand on the putter for a few putts. Then gently place the right-hand on it for the purpose of accurately send the ball to the hole.

Finally, most accuracy sports/games like darts just use the coordinated hand to direct the dart. Why should golfers try to be accurate with two hands do the motion that needs to be accurate and precise?

Chapter 5

Green Reading

This chapter contains a collection of notes and reminders regarding green reading:

1. Start looking for peaks/valleys around the green as you approach it
2. Greens are usually built from a level table top under the green
3. The usual front-to-back slope of 3-4 degrees is generated in most greens
4. Mounds are included to generate a breaking putting surface
5. Grass around the hole is the most important because the ball is slowing down and the break will have the greatest effect
6. Grass around the ball is less affected as the ball is going faster
7. The best view is a low position about 10 feet behind the ball
8. Visualize a coin 18" outside each edge of the hole
9. The break can be determined by which coin is higher and by how much
10. The next best view is from behind the hole- especially on downhill putts
11. The third best perspective is from the low side
12. Before it is your turn, estimate the distance by walking near the line
13. Sometimes your feet can help you understand the slope
14. Every putt is stroked as a straight putt along the starting line
15. 83% of direction is due to face-angle, but putter path can affect face-angle
16. Speed of a putt dictates the amount of break
17. Your caddy cannot tell you what the break without knowing the speed
18. For a big break, aim higher that the break suggests
19. Watch putts/chips of others to better understand the break and fall-line
20. Aim for entering the hole at hour-hand on a clock

Aimpoint Express is a relatively new protocol used by a few Pros to help visualize the break in a particular putt. You might see Adam Scott hold out 1-3 fingers as he lines up a putt. In short, this system is not for amateurs but see Lee Woodard for details if needed.

The Aimpoint Express system is based on if you can read a percent break on a putt with your feet! I cannot. The required time and effort is huge plus you need a keen sensory perception to do this. Also most of the 'foot analysis' is not done in the critical area around the hole. In addition, it is impossible to estimate a break without knowing the speed at which the ball is going to going. Lastly, I have seen some Aimpoint golfers that use it with a straight arm and others with a bent arm- those two methods provide two different breaks.

Another failing of Aimpoint is that it does not take grain into account.

Grain complicates the reading of the green, primarily on Bermuda grass. You can read the grain best by realizing the darker color part of the green suggests the grain is against you and the lighter/shinier grass suggests the grain is with your putt. Additional information can be obtained from the grass at the edges of the cup- one side will have a jagged edge with blades growing toward the hole center indicates the direction of the grain at the hole.

Chapter 6

Purposeful Practice

When you practice or warm-up your putting stroke, realize that the worst place in the world to try to sink putts is on a practice green where the lumpy donut or volcano at the hole has been produced from a few thousand footprints that get to an inch of the hole to get there ball out plus usually the practice green holes are not moved for days. It is best to putt to a rubber phony-hole to avoid the volcano. Or stick an aim-stick into the ground. Or stick two aim-sticks into the ground 3-4 inches apart. Only bank on sinking 2 foot or less putts on the practice green. If I have tennis shoes on, I will press down the volcano to the normal height on the practice green.

* Putt to literally nowhere with focus on speed direction, and roll
* Practice and 'own' 10-yard putts with 10 balls and tapping-in the 2nd putts
* Practice and 'own' 2.5-foot putts
* Brush-in 3 foot putts without a backswing
* Putt with just the left hand- then just the right hand- then with both hands
* Putt to the fringe for a 30 foot putt and guess closeness to fringe before looking up
* Practice greens are the toughest for several reasons because of the unpredictable surface including 'lumping donut' and aged cup positions- so putt to a phony hole or tee
* When developing the stroke, use several balls and semi-rapid fire to get the feel
* When getting ready to play, use 1 (or a max of 2) ball(s) for 2 days before event
* Putt with an aimline
* Best putting analysis system is the SAM PuttLab
* Putt with an aim stick under armpits
* Best training aids depending on your particular needs include the following:
* Aimline
* Phony holes
* Putting mirror
* Putting arc
* Putting Professor
* Breakmaster
* Cameron Cube device
* Laser aiming device
* Ipad, Iphone video with Hudl app
* ZGA Putting Mat
* Lined golf balls or O-balls
* Pelz Putter clips
* Metronome
* Impact tape or footpowder
* EyeLine Putter Extension to sternum
* Visio Putter Path

Chapter 7

Memorization

Chapter 2 (General Putting Nuggets) must be committed to memory. Do not take the entire list to the golf course. But you can write down 1-3 Nuggets D' Jour on a 3x5 card to take to the course of put in your golf bag.

I have used several methods to memorize specific concepts. I have used flash cards with the concept on one side and a code/abbreviation on the other side. I also have a flash card app on my Iphone, but it is a bit cumbersome.

The best method for me is to record the concepts via voice memos on my Iphone. Then I just loop through the Putting Nuggets voice memo when I am walking, etc. You can find and use the first-cut at my voice memos for putting nuggets found on ZoneGolfers.com near the bottom of the PUTTING SCHOOL page/tab.

To test yourself, use a partner to check-off the concept from the list as you recite them. This exercise helps both people.

Finally, we can provide you with a quiz of the concepts presented. For more information, please contact Lee Woodard.

Chapter 8

ZGA Putting School

The ZGA Putting School has been designed and developed so that you can become your own putting instructor in the future. The school includes 2-4 hours of instruction, a detailed introduction to the workbook, and the workbook itself. The school consists of two stages

 **Stage 1**. The first mandatory stage includes a 2-hour instructional session (at your usual ZGA instructional rate) plus the workbook with the various checklists. We first video the golfer's stroke from face-on and down-the-line perspectives using an aim-line. Then we create a voice-over video with an instructional evaluation of the your putting stroke.

Then we use the mechanics checklist to identify what/how the golfer needs to improve his stroke and to teach the golfer what the simplified model stroke (which has the best chance to repeat) looks like. Then the golfer is setup with particular training aids and drills to improve specific weak areas in the golfer's stroke.

 **Stage 2.** This second stage, which is optional, is available to those who have successfully completed Stage 1. The duration of this stage varies from 1-2 hours at your usual ZGA rate. After some purposeful practice, we then video the improved stroke and lack of movement. If the original weak areas have been fixed, the SAM Puttlab will be used to measure and display 28 parameters (including rhythm, angle-of-attack, exact face rotation, putter path, timing, contact point, etc.) of the putting stroke to identify some suggestions to fine-tune the stroke.

Chapter 9

About Me

I was very fortunate to have two fantastic putting mentors in James Sieckmann (PGA Tour short game specialist) and Tom Pernice, Jr. for almost 10 years.

I have also learned first-hand from Dr. Joe Parent, Dr. Craig Farnsworth, Dave Pelz, and Stan Utely.

My 20+ years of daily playing, studying, and coaching the great game of golf along with instruction from the above putting experts as well as 30+ books on putting have helped me developed the ZGA Putting System and the easy-to-use "ZGA Putting Workbook: The Fastest Track to Excellent Putting". This is the only putting book you will ever need.

Appendix

ZGA Putting Video Analysis

Down-the-Line View

 Eye Line \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Body Lines \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Head Movements \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Lower Body Stillness\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Contact Point \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Putter Path \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Front-On View

 Stance Width \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Ball Position \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Suspension Point \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Stroke Length/Symmetry \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Hold the Follow-Through\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_