**ZGA Putting Workbook:**

Fastest-Track to Excellent Putting



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Introduction

***You currently have everything it takes to become an excellent putter in a short period of time except for the proper knowledge-base of putting concepts and some 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, 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 improvement in putting. Repeatability and mental clarity are the keys to becoming an excellent putter. So you can choose either to follow the well defined steps presented in this work book 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 not averaging 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.)

A golfer does not need the size, strength, power, flexibility, and fast-twitch muscles of a touring pro to be an excellent putter. A golfer does not need to spend long hours in the gym or on the driving range. A golfer does not 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 four 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.

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 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 6).

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. These putting concepts are simple, but work to learn, apply, retain.
2. Look for spot under the ball after impact- NO PEEKING
3. Body lines must be parallel left of the target line
4. 'Cement-in the Y', rock the shoulders, and hold the follow-through
5. Or maintain your suspension point and hold the follow-through
6. Commit to the process, the read, desired path, desired speed
7. It is better to be certain than to be correct- a fearful stroke is 'jabby'
8. Focus on path, speed, and roll- you cannot control the ball going in
9. Speed is important, visualize exactly where you want the ball to end up
10. Roll ball on desired start line indicated by the intermediate target
11. The ball is either going to go in or not- it is no big deal either way
12. If you are going to miss the putt ensure that you execute a good stroke
13. Celebrate a successful putt regardless of length
14. Forget putts that do not go in as there are numerous reasons for it
15. Brad Faxon putts his best when it's as if it doesn't matter
16. If the ball does not go in, the speed should carry it 16" past the hole
17. Lower body should feel like it is in cement- lower body does not move!!
18. Watch the other golfers' putts
19. Pace off your putt above the putting line to get exact distance
20. "The ball does not know" the importance of the putt.
21. Every putt is the same.
22. No worries about outcome
23. Every putt is merely a ball, hole, putt, a strip of grass, and you
24. Mental clarity starts with a focus on the process without distractions
25. 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 putter have a great routine and attitude.
4. You make more puts when you don't care if you miss
5. Putting is all about your mind and attitude.
6. Remove any notion of fear to be an excellent putter.
7. Putting is fun. Learn to love putting.
8. Putting is not a complicated stroke.
9. Putting is primarily a mental challenge.
10. Develop selective amnesia regarding missed putts
11. Replaying missed putts in your brain is like missing again and again...
12. Optimism rules!
13. Free-will helps you to eliminate distractions and pick out a target.
14. Touch goes first when you are fearful and doubtful.
15. Fear and doubt dictates your behavior and influences your stroke.
16. A miss is just a miss- don't let it ignite fear or doubt.
17. After a miss, the only constructive action is to forget- and a practice stroke.
18. Celebrate even short putts- make it a mild celebration.
19. There are 327 million minus 1 people in the U.S. don't care about your putt.
20. And 7.7 billion minus 1 people in the world don't care about your putt.
21. Brad Faxon often works on thinking about nothing mechanical.
22. The stroke must be repeatable: develop a stroke that can be repeated.
23. Use a success journal.
24. People tend to become what they think about themselves.
25. Strong putting routine and mindset are your allies on the green.
26. A strong mindset is difficult to achieve and easy to lose.
27. A strong mindset must be practiced and maintained.
28. Develop a proper mental routine; rely on it under pressure; push a button.
29. Inner talk provides a self fulfilling prophecy.
30. Visualize the ball going into the hole.
31. Putt as if you were a kid.
32. 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 putting stroke 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 maybe 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 head in middle of stance; ball is slightly ahead of middle.
* Shoulders rock, the rest of the body is still- 'lower body is in cement'
* Cement the 'Y', rock the shoulders, and hold the follow-through
* Or 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 downswing 'fall-like'

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

Chapter 4

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 most important because the ball is slowing down
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 the putts/chips of others to better understand the break & 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. The entire 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.

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 5

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 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, 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 what you are working on, are:
* 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 6

Memorization

The 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 stuff. 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 - 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 and if requested, I can provide you with a quiz to take about the concepts.

Chapter 7

ZGA Putting School

This workbook provides the key ingredients for the ZGA Putting School. Using this workbook and checklists, you can approximate our normal 4-hour golf school.

At our schools, 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 instructional evaluation of the your putting stroke.

The next step is to go through the mechanics checklist to teach the golfer what the simplified model stroke (which has the best chance to repeat) looks like.

Then we refine the areas to improve in the golfer's stroke. And set them up with specific training aids to help improve the stroke weak areas.

After some purposeful practice, we 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.

The next steps are:

* + Motivational Nuggets
	+ General Putting Nuggets
	+ Green Reading
	+ Practice and Drills

Chapter 8

Resources

I was very fortunate to have two fantastic putting mentors in James Sieckmann (James' "Putting Solution" book is the best) and Tom Pernice, Jr. for almost 10 years. The ZGA putting system is based on their system, but I have included concepts I learned first-hand from Dr. Joe Parent, Dr. Craig Farnsworth, Dave Pelz, and Stan Utely.

I have consolidated and condensed the putting education from the above brilliant putting experts and other authors along with my 20 years of daily experimenting and practicing to form the "ZGA Putting Workook: Fastest Track to Excellent Putting"

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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\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_