

YOUR COACH



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VALUE
SPECIAL

HOW THIS CAN HELP YOUR GAME

As the cost of living escalates, a cheap bag of tee pegs and 14 simple lessons can revolutionise every area of your game

PICTURES BOB ATKINS

Launch monitors, force plates, 3D motion capture, even artificial intelligence. Fantastic tech and insight of course... but it all comes with an equally impressive price tag attached. And in 2022, when you need to sell your partner's motor to raise the funds to fill up yours, that's

not always an attractive option. How fortunate we are, then, that an infinitely cheaper alternative is right under our noses – literally, if you're crowding the ball a bit at set-up.

Setting you back a quid or so, a bag of tee pegs could be not just the cheapest training aid you will ever buy, but

also the best. Creating a so-called 'external focus' – a focal point for your attention outside your body – they complement the latest wisdom on learning, helping you deal in outcomes rather than confusion-inducing mechanics; and they are genuinely versatile, able to help you drive it further,

hole out more consistently and do pretty much everything in between.

These peg-based drills will show you how. Make them a regular part of your practice and you might even end up leaving the course with more cash than you had when you arrived, and these days, that's a pretty solid incentive.

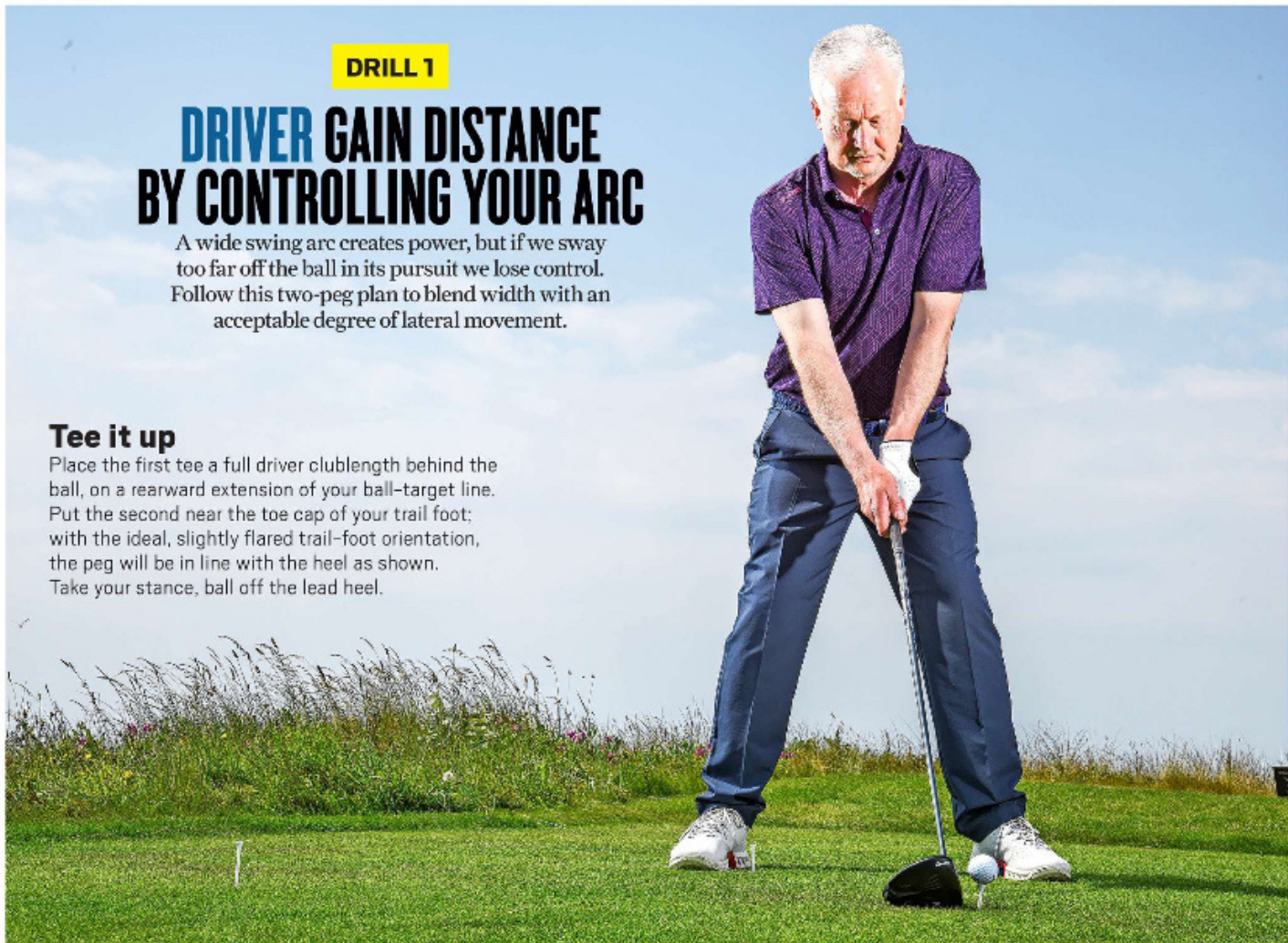
DRILL 1

DRIVER GAIN DISTANCE BY CONTROLLING YOUR ARC

A wide swing arc creates power, but if we sway too far off the ball in its pursuit we lose control. Follow this two-peg plan to blend width with an acceptable degree of lateral movement.

Tee it up

Place the first tee a full driver clublength behind the ball, on a rearward extension of your ball-target line. Put the second near the toe cap of your trail foot; with the ideal, slightly flared trail-foot orientation, the peg will be in line with the heel as shown. Take your stance, ball off the lead heel.



Your mission with this exercise is twofold:

- Swing the clubhead out towards the rear peg. You'll be swinging over it rather than clipping it, but the intention helps you set a strong, wide arc.
- As your arms swing the clubhead back to the rear peg, use a little body shift and rotation to feel you are turning over the peg near your foot. Note that weight transfer should happen very early in the swing, during this initial move away. Set it – then rotate around it.

Guided by the tee pegs, these twin objectives will help you train the ability to swing wide without drifting off the ball – setting you up for a downswing that blends arc power with rotational control.



DRILL 2

DRIVER BITE DOWN FOR MORE DISTANCE

Many club golfers never give themselves a chance to create proper speed and power because they deny themselves space for their shoulders to rotate. A single tee peg can sort this.

1. Tee it up

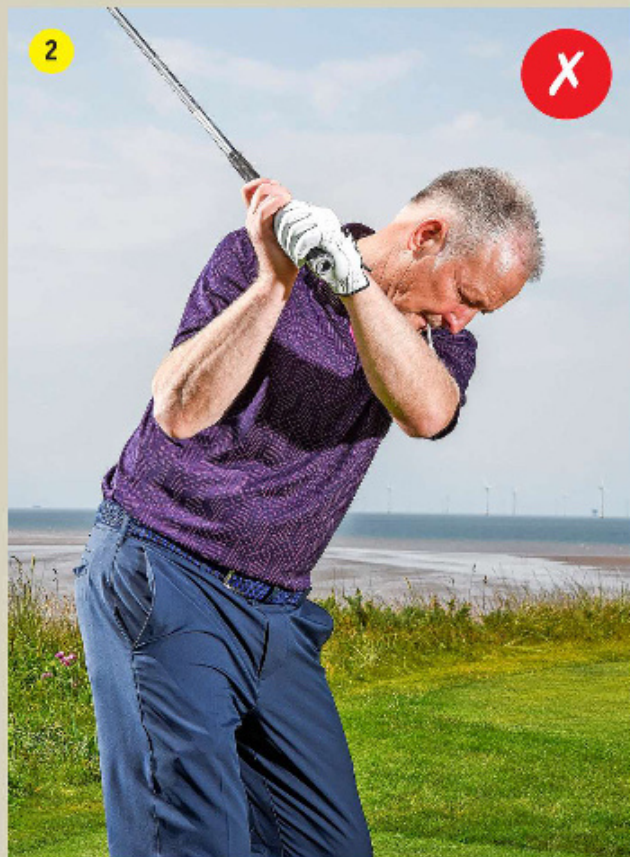
Place the end of a long tee peg between your teeth, biting gently to hold it in place. Take your address.

2. Collision course

It's that old classic: 'Keep your head down'. Try to do this and your head will drop forward, denying your shoulders room to turn. The peg in your mouth will flag this up because the top of your lead arm will run into it as you swing back.

3. Free and clear

In contrast, a straighter spine gives your lead shoulder all the space it needs to turn back under your chin, while aligning your vertebrae in better positions to rotate. If you can set a flatter upper back and nape of the neck, the lead shoulder and arm can move cleanly below the peg.



DRILL 3

FULL SWING BANISH YOUR SLICING TRANSITION

The external focus value of tee peg drills is nowhere better demonstrated than in this exercise, which can overcome an apparently ingrained over-the-top slicer's move to see you shallow the club and the plane with surprisingly little effort.



1. Tee it up

You'll need four tees here. Place the first two a clublength apart, both on the ball-target line. Place the third six inches or so inside the target line, in line with the rear tee. Position the ball between the two target-line pegs, three quarters of the way towards the forward peg. Stick the fourth tee into the butt of the club. Take your address.

2. Takeaway: Far tee focus

Move the club away with the intention of it pointing down at the far, rear tee peg. This will help you start your swing on line, and avoid any tendency to whip the club inside — a common root cause of the over-the-top swing pattern.

3. Backswing: Near tee focus

Swing back until your lead arm is horizontal. Your goal at this point is to have the peg in the butt of the club — and therefore the shaft — pointing down at the near, inside peg. This will perhaps put your backswing on to a slightly steeper plane than you are used to; but if we want to shallow the club rather than steepen it on the way down, we need to get here first.

4. Downswing: Forward tee focus

Now, as you transition into the downswing, picture the tee peg in the butt of your club pointing at the peg in front of the ball. Stage the position and you will feel how the clubshaft naturally shallows, putting you in great shape to attack the ball from the inside. As you begin to hit balls, focus on a different peg/position on each shot. After just a few swings, you'll start to feel the shape of your action changing from that ugly shallow-to-steep to a far more effective steep-to-shallow.

DRILL 4

IRONS POINT DOWN FOR A PURE STRIKE

You will find your strongest, cleanest and purest iron strike when your attack angle is a few degrees downwards. Tee pegs can assist you in these simple and effective ways...

Lead wrist move

We are going to train a strong iron strike by working on the positioning of the gloved hand. When the wristbone leads the knuckles through the strike, we can deloft the face and deliver a powerful, compressing contact. Feel this position by swinging with your lead hand only; simply focus on pointing the tee to the ground through the impact zone.

Tee it up

Open up your glove. Place a tee in the corner, pointing upwards as shown, and refasten the glove.



Keep it down

When pointing the peg downwards begins to feel more comfortable and natural, take your iron and hit a few shots. As before, forget mechanics; keep your attention solely on pointing that peg to the grass for as long as possible. It may take you a few goes to find your timing, but when it clicks in you can expect to see a better strike pattern and a lower, stronger ball flight.



DRILL 5

IRONS USE A LOW TEE TO FEEL THE SQUEEZE



Tee it up

Stick a peg in the ground a couple of inches forward of the ball, on the target line. Make sure only the top, widening portion is above ground. Take your regular address, ball just forward of centre in your stance, and place your attention on the tee.



Double hit

Your simple goal here is for the clubface to strike that low tee just after impact with the ball. Achieve that and you will train:

- That all-important, slightly descending strike. A rising attack angle will miss the tee.
- Good impact mechanics – weight into the lead side, handle leading the head – without having to think of them.
- A growing feeling of ‘collecting’ the ball, rather than hitting at it.

DRILL 6

SHOT SHAPING (1) USE AN EYELASH TO TRAIN PATH AND FACE

OK, it might be beyond the power of the humble tee peg to turn you into a master shotshaper; but when practising, there are two ways they can help you hone your draw or fade. We'll take them in turn.



Tee it up

When you're working on shaping your shots, place three pegs in front of the ball, fanning out like an eyelash as shown. The middle peg should point straight down your target line, the left peg around 10 yards left of it and the right peg around 10 yards right.

Path finders

As you hit balls, use these pegs as indicators for the ideal shot-shaping club delivery.

For the fade (right-handers):

- Club swings along the leftward peg angle.
- Face aims between the leftward and centre pegs.

For the draw (right-handers):

- Club swings along the rightward peg angle.
- Face aims between the rightward and centre pegs.

DRILL 7

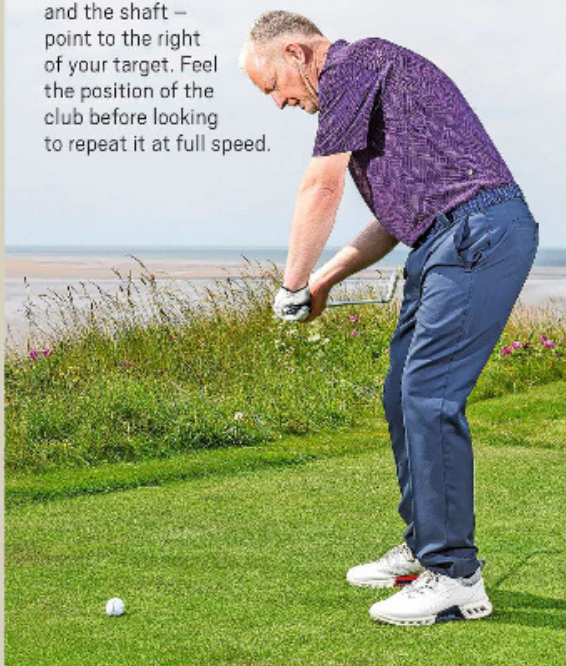
SHOT SHAPING (2) PERFECT DELIVERY PATH

Tee it up

For the second exercise – which can be used with the first – insert the peg into the butt of your club. Keep your attention on the peg – and where it points – during the downswing. The path of your swing is indicated by the aim of the clubshaft as it swings through horizontal – and we can use this to our advantage.

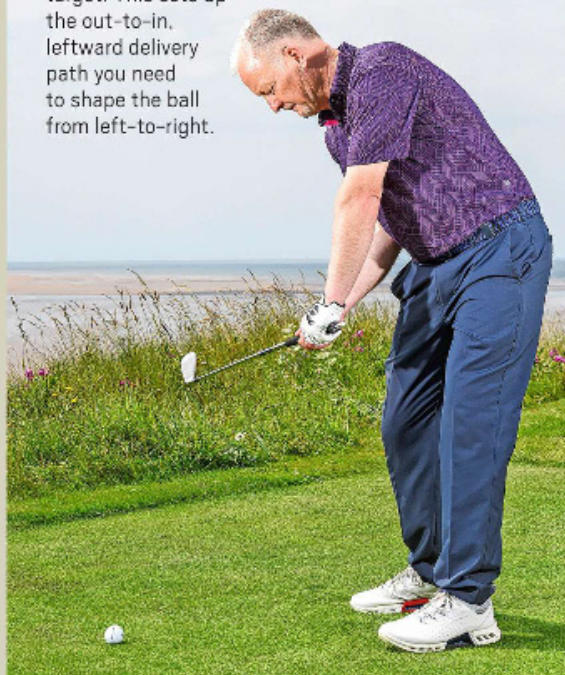
Draw delivery Peg points rightward

For the right-hander, to play the draw you need the club swinging from inside to outside the target line through impact. Use the peg as a sighter for this delivery. Swing down slowly to this delivery position, ensuring the peg – and the shaft – point to the right of your target. Feel the position of the club before looking to repeat it at full speed.



Fade delivery Peg points leftward

If you're a right-handed player looking to fade the ball, rehearse a delivery position where the tee peg and shaft point left of your target. This sets up the out-to-in, leftward delivery path you need to shape the ball from left-to-right.



DRILL 8

BUNKERS ADJUST YOUR GRIP FOR HEIGHT AND STRIKE

For greenside bunker shots we need to hold the face square-to-open through the shot; besides adding loft and height, it promotes use of the sole 'bounce' and an effective, shallow and skidding sand strike. Use tee pegs to build the hold that helps you achieve this.

Tee it up

On greenside bunker shots we need to set both palms more on top of the club. This gives the trail hand a 'weaker' orientation that wants to resist rotation and cups the lead wrist, helping us preserve an open face.

Peg guide

Clasp tee pegs between your thumbs and index fingers to help as shown; as you turn your hands into each other the pegs will start to cross, the lead-hand peg pointing to the right and the trail-hand peg to the left (right-handers).

1. Backswing Open face check

Once you've created this grip, take your regular stance. Swing back until the clubshaft is around horizontal; note how this new hold helps the clubface fan open naturally, the grooves looking at the sky.

2. Throughswing Anti-rotation

Hit the shot, holding your followthrough position as shown. Again, check the position of the clubface; your new, anti-rotation grip will help you finish with the leading edge close to horizontal – a sure sign you've held the face square-to-open through the strike.



DRILL 9

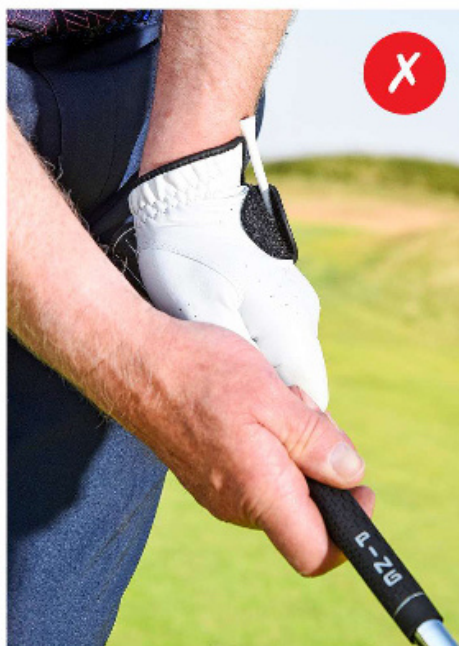
CHIPPING AND PITCHING BEAT THE FLIP

Of all the problems afflicting club players on shorter shots, flipping the clubhead forward is surely the most widespread and the most damaging. Compromising strike and attack angle, it leads to weak, thin shots and a complete loss of confidence. For a sharp reminder not to flip, use a tee peg.



Tee it up

Open the Velcro on your glove. Place a tee peg against the back of your hand, sharp end downwards, and refasten the glove to hold it in place. Take your grip and note how the top end of the tee peg sits against your lead wrist.



Pressure point

When the clubhead flips forwards past the handle, we see it most in the cupping and breaking down of the lead wrist. When that happens with a tee peg in your glove Velcro, you soon know about it.



No pain, all gain

With the peg in place, you quickly learn how to keep that lead wrist flatter through the strike. When the peg maintains contact with the wrist – but with no increase in pressure – you will avoid the dreaded clubhead flip. Instead of thins and high shots, you'll start to enjoy far better short-game striking... and results.

DRILL 10

CHIPPING AND PITCHING ADD VERSATILITY

Sometimes we need to float one up, other times we need to work it in low. The difference in trajectories is driven by our attack angle. Create two contrasting, tee peg-based hitting stations to work on this.



Tee it up High shot

Place a low tee peg opposite the ball. Flank it with two high tees, a foot behind and a foot in front, both on your ball-target line. Feel the leading edge of your wedge trace the top of all three tees as it swings down and through... so copying the wide, shallow and symmetrical arc they depict. This will help you find the ideal attack for a lofted pitch or chip.



Tee it up Low shot

This time set your three pegs to suggest a descending attack: from the back high, mid-height and low. Again, feel the clubhead follows the height of the pegs as it moves down and through the impact zone. This time, a more downward sequence will help you create and deliver a more squeezing attack that keeps loft off the face.

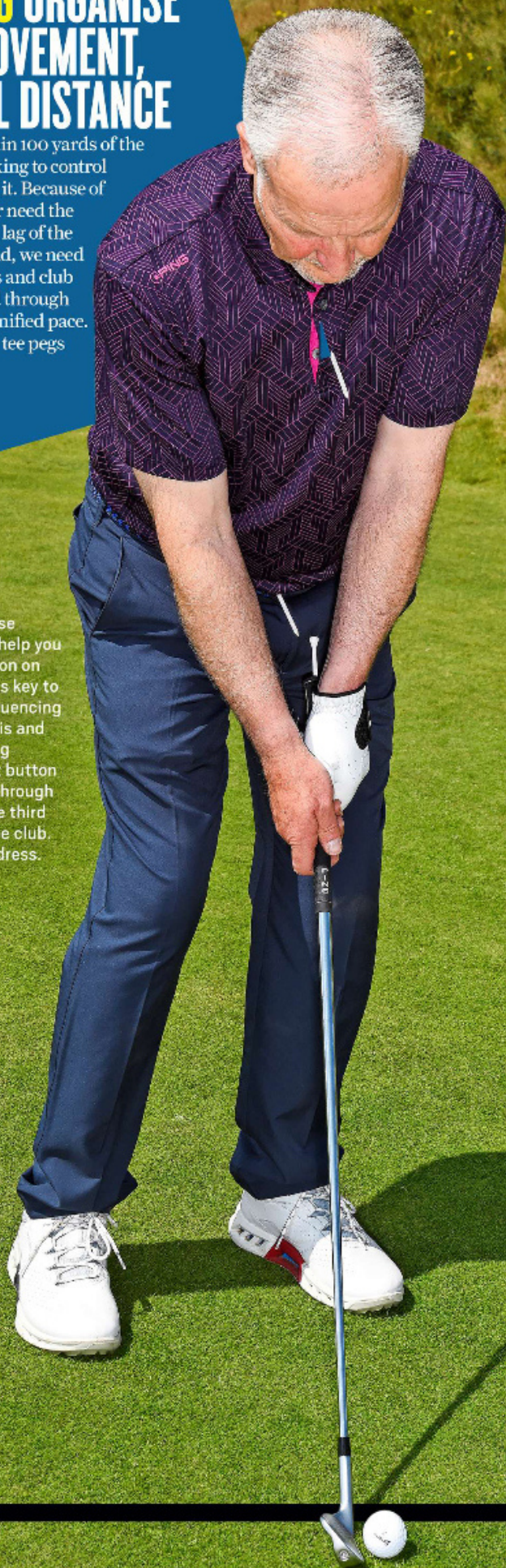
DRILL 11

PITCHING ORGANISE YOUR MOVEMENT, CONTROL DISTANCE

As we move within 100 yards of the green we are looking to control power, not create it. Because of this, we no longer need the twist, torque and lag of the full swing. Instead, we need to feel body, arms and club moving back and through together, at one unified pace. Here's how three tee pegs can help...

Tee it up

We are going to use three tee pegs to help you place your attention on the three elements key to good pitching sequencing – your chest, pelvis and club. Stick one peg through your shirt button hole, the second through a belt hole and the third into the butt of the club. Now take your address.



Backswing Holey trinity

Although these three regions will move different distances through the swing, we need to feel their movement is connected and united. This is how we can control the plane of the swing and the speed of the club. So as you swing back, place your attention on the three pegs and feel them moving as one.



Downswing Crack unit

Keep the same intention right through to the finish of the swing. It will help your action feel metered and co-ordinated, your body and arms making an equal contribution to the delivery of the club. Hit a series of shots with the three pegs in place, before removing them and repeating the feeling. Be sure to keep even backswing and throughswing lengths.

DRILL 12

PUTTING ADD A 'POP' FOR BETTER HOLING OUT

A longer stroke tends to mean more rotation... which means the blade passes through square only briefly. A shorter, more popping tempo can keep the putterface looking at the hole for longer. Tees can help.

Tee it up

Set up two tee peg gateways around 12 inches apart, just wider than the putterhead. Position the ball three quarters of the way towards the front gate and mark the position with a fifth tee. Take your stance, ensuring the ball/fifth peg is just inside the lead heel.



Crisp flavour

From here, simply swing back to the rear gate and through to the front gate. This will give your action a shorter, crisper, more popping feel. You'll lose that rotational, wafty throughswing and gain accuracy quickly.

DRILL 13

PUTTING TRY A TEE BREAK TO GAIN CONSISTENCY

Busy hands and wrists will ruin your putt by affecting face aim, attack angle and path. Use a tee peg to link your arms to the putter and bring the two back into one, harmonious movement.



Tee it up

You'll need a wooden tee for this drill, for obvious reasons! Stick the tee into the butt of your putter, before cracking it halfway up to create a right angle. This might take a couple of pegs to get right. Grip at the bottom of the handle, allowing the top, bent-over part of the peg to sit against your lead forearm.



Keep in touch

From here all you need to do is swing the putter back and through while retaining that contact, peg on forearm. Excessive hand and wrist action will affect that relationship:

- Handle-dragging will force the peg into the forearm and will likely snap the top half off completely.
- A clubhead flip will move the peg off the forearm.

Only a quiet-wristed stroke, dominated by the arms and shoulders, will allow you to maintain the peg/forearm connection you set at address.

DRILL 14

PUTTING FRAME YOUR START LINE TO HOLE MORE

Given how often flawed perception is responsible for missed short putts, using tee pegs to frame the ball's path to the hole should be a staple for your putting practice.

1

Tee it up

Begin by rolling a few balls to find a straight putt on the practice green. Once established, use a clubshaft or flagstick to mark the straight line between the ball and the hole. Place two tee pegs a foot or so in front of the ball to frame that line. They should be around the width of the hole apart.

2

See straight

Address the ball. Run your eyes from ball to hole: does the peg gateway look in the right place? If it looks offset, this is evidence your perception of square is skewed. Play about with your head position and eyeline until the gate looks on line.

3

Find the gap

Now practise rolling balls through the peg gateway. Make sure you are hitting from the same position each time. Spend some time building confidence through finding the gate and finding the cup. Return to this exercise regularly to make sure your picture of the line is marrying up with the true path.