

Mastering Sloped Greens: Improve Your Putting Game with the String Drill

Mastering the flat green is only the beginning; the real challenge—and opportunity—for improvement in your putting game lies in navigating the slopes. Uphill, downhill, and sidehill putts test not just your ability to read the green but also your precision in controlling the speed of the ball. To elevate your skill in these more complex scenarios, we introduce a targeted practice drill using two pieces of string. This exercise is designed to refine your speed control on slopes, an essential skill for any golfer looking to lower their scores and handle the greens more effectively.

The Challenge of Sloped Greens

Slopes on the green add a significant layer of complexity to putting. The gravity's effect on the ball's speed varies dramatically depending on whether you're putting uphill, downhill, or across a sidehill slope. Successfully navigating these variations requires reading the green's contour and adjusting your putting stroke to compensate for how the slope will affect the ball's speed and path. Mastering this aspect of putting can turn challenging greens into opportunities to gain strokes in the competition.

Setting Up the String Drill

This drill uses two pieces of string placed perpendicular to the line of the putt to create a "target" on the green. The distance between the strings should be adjusted based on the length of the putt: one foot apart for 10-foot putts, two feet apart for 20-foot putts, and so on. This setup helps focus on controlling the putt's speed to stop it within this confined space.

- For 10-foot putts, lay the strings 5 feet long and one foot apart.
- For 20-foot putts, adjust the strings to be two feet apart, keeping them 5 feet long.
- Choose varying slopes on the green for the drill, uphill, downhill, and sidehill, to practice adjusting your putting stroke under different conditions.

Executing the Drill

Start by placing ten balls at your chosen starting distance from the strings. The goal is to putt each ball so it stops between the strings, simulating a controlled approach to the hole.

- Uphill Putts: Focus on hitting the ball with enough power to combat the slope, but not so much that it overshoots the string boundary.
- Downhill Putts: Practice a softer touch, allowing gravity to do more work and prevent the ball from rolling too far past the target area.
- Sidehill Putts: Adjust your aim to account for how the slope will affect the ball's lateral movement, aiming to keep the ball within the strings for its entire roll.

Scoring and Progress Tracking

Count how often you successfully stop the ball within the string boundaries for each set of ten putts. This count serves as your score for the drill, providing a clear metric to gauge your progress. Regularly practicing this drill and tracking your scores over time will help you identify improvements in your slope-putting skills and areas that need further work.

Analyzing Common Mistakes and Adjustments

One common mistake is misjudging the amount of adjustment needed for different slopes. Uphill putts often require more power than anticipated, while downhill putts need less. Sidehill putts might require significant lateral aim adjustments. Recognizing these needs and adjusting your stroke length is critical to mastering sloped putts.

Incorporating the Drill into Your Practice Routine

Integrate this drill into your regular putting practice sessions, alternating between flat and sloped surfaces to develop a well-rounded skill set. Practicing the string drill 2-3 times a week can significantly improve your ability to judge and control speed on sloped greens.

Conclusion

Controlling your putt speed on slopes is an advanced skill that can significantly impact your performance on the green. Regularly practicing the string drill will give you a finer touch and a better understanding of adjusting your putts for uphill, downhill, and sidehill lies. Remember, improvement in putting, especially on slopes, requires patience and consistent practice. Embrace the challenge, and watch your confidence and competence on the greens grow, leading to lower scores and more enjoyable rounds.

Read this article for another fantastic putting drill [Reverse Leap Frog Drill](#)