



TUNE UP your game

**4 DRILLS TO HELP
YOU DEVELOP BETTER
FEEL & SCORING TOUCH**

Spring has nearly arrived and The Masters is just a few weeks away—meaning, if the golf bug hasn't hit you already, it will very shortly. And, just like every professional baseball player or athlete, you need some time to shake off the rust and regain your touch and feel for the upcoming season. This is especially true of those scoring shots on and around the green that seem to take the longest to re-master and feel good about.

What follows is a series of drills—starting from the green and working back—designed to help you reacquire your touch and rhythm, and have you feeling confident about your game from the very first approach to the first putt of the season. Work these drills into your practice routine and you should hit the ground running in 2016.

TAP FOR MORE



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PUTTING

Capture the Right Speed

AimPoint research defines the perfect “capture speed” for each putt to be 6 to 12 inches beyond the hole. In other words, if the putt hits any part of the hole at this speed it should fall in. The farther past the hole the capture speed is, the more you effectively shrink the hole. To groove your capture speed for the season, create a ghost hole using a thin rubber jar opener and set two tees down 12” past the hole, representing your capture zone. Hit five putts, giving yourself 1 point for hitting any part of the hole but going beyond the capture zone, 2 points for rolling the ball over the hole but finishing inside the zone, and a -1 if you miss short of the hole. The goal is to score 10 points. As you get better at this, shrink the zone to 6 to 12 inches.



Pay more attention to where you're landing the ball and less on the flagstick.

CHIPPING

Connect to Your Landing Zone

Most amateurs pay more attention to the flagstick than they do where they want to land the ball, which is why they often take too big a swing and mis-hit their chips. Make it a goal to hit your landing spot more consistently and your touch and distance control will improve dramatically. To practice this, create a 3' x 3' landing zone a few paces on the green using some tees. Drop several balls in the fringe, and see how many you can chip into the box, paying attention to how far each chip rolls out. Don't just chip with your sand wedge; use all of your chipping clubs, and then move progressively farther away from the green so that you have to adjust the size of your swing. The only thing you can control in the short game is getting the ball to where you're trying to land it. Work on this "Landing Zone Drill" and you'll start knocking your chips much closer to the hole.



Hit pitches with only 2 fingers on the grip to gain a better awareness for the clubhead.

PITCHING

Feel the Weight of the Clubhead

When pitching, I always advise my students to lighten their grip pressure and be as soft-handed as possible. This gives them a better sense for the weight of the clubhead, improving their awareness of the clubhead and thus making it easier to control. Softening your grip pressure also helps eliminate tension in the wrists and forearms, so that you have an easier time hinging and re-hinging your wrists and controlling speed. To gain a better awareness for the clubhead, hit some pitches with only the thumb and forefinger of your right hand on the club (inset photo). With less of your hand on the grip, the clubhead will feel much heavier and the club will almost swing itself. Make sure that your body pivot keeps pace with your arm swing. This is vital to good pitching because if the two get out of sync, you're liable to hit the shot fat or blade it.



FULL SWING Smooth Out Your Bottom

Tee up four balls in a row, progressively lowering the tee height from high to medium to low to on the ground. Work your way down the line, swinging at the level of each ball. If you can hit all four balls flush, then you've completed the perfect set. The purpose of the "Descending Tee Drill" is twofold: 1) It helps improve your hand-eye coordination since you have to adjust your swing to the various levels of each ball, a big help when you have to hit off so many uneven lies on the course; and 2) it gives you a sensation for what a smooth bottom to the swing is. Hitting all four balls in such rapid fashion encourages you to swing more freely, removing any hesitation you might have at the bottom of the swing out of fear of hitting the ground. Your confidence builds as your swing bottom gradually gravitates toward the ground, to the point where after performing the drill several times, you don't even realize the ground is there. **GCA**

Progressively lower each tee until you're comfortable hitting off the ground.