

LadyGolfer

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May 2006 £2.90

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Getting into a hole

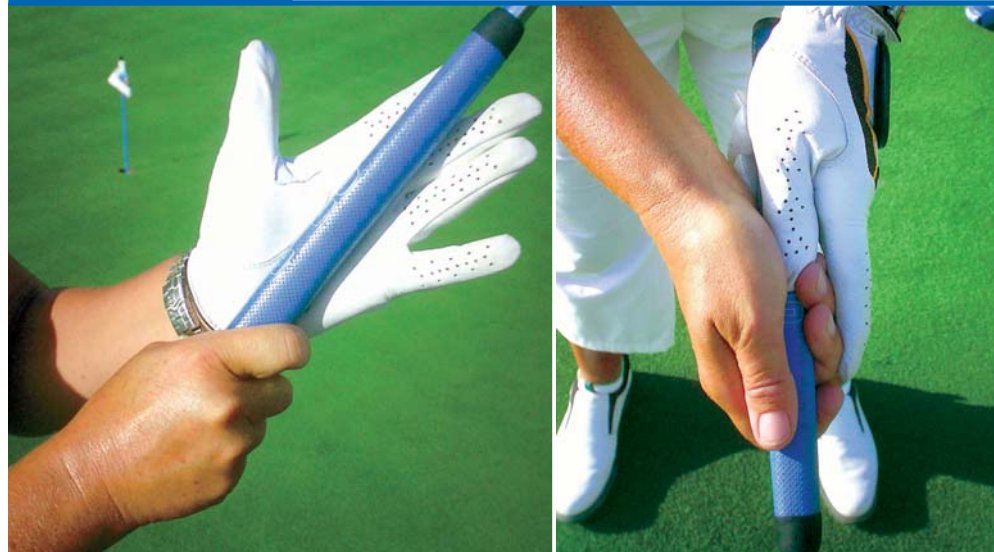
If putting is a problem for you then here's some great advice

PUTTING accounts for up to half our scores – and we ladies are significantly worse at putting than our male counterparts. When Annika Sorenstam played on the men's PGA Tour two years ago, she was in the top echelon of players for greens and fairways in regulation – but right at the bottom of the putting stats.

According to the experts, there is certainly proof that women do not judge distances as well as men – my next door neighbour has a similar theory which involves parking!

But putting is a skill that can be learned like any other and it involves neither exceptional strength or hand-eye co-ordination. It can be learned and improved on with quality tuition and practice.

Getting a grip



All good putters modify their grips. The standard grip, in the fingers, allows for wrist hinge and rotation, neither of which is

particularly helpful to your putting stroke. Check you are gripping the putter more in your hands than your fingers.

The reverse overlap



Unlike other clubs, putters have grips with flat sides. This allows the club to sit more in the hands than the fingers. Starting with your left hand place the flat side of

the grip along the seam of your glove. Keeping your left hand in place, position the flat side of the grip along the life line of your right hand, then extend the index

finger of the left hand over the fingers of the right. You will see from the position above that my thumbs are to the side of the front of the grip.

Try left below right for a perfect pendulum

Many good players have opted for this grip as the natural way to promote a pendulum stroke controlled by the shoulder and leading arm rather than, for many of us, the dominant and dangerous right hand.

Place the grip in the hands, with the thumbs to the side. There is no connection between the hands and the left arm should be extended with the left hand towards the lower part of the grip. The right hand stays light on the club with the club sitting in the hand rather than the fingers.

To be avoided

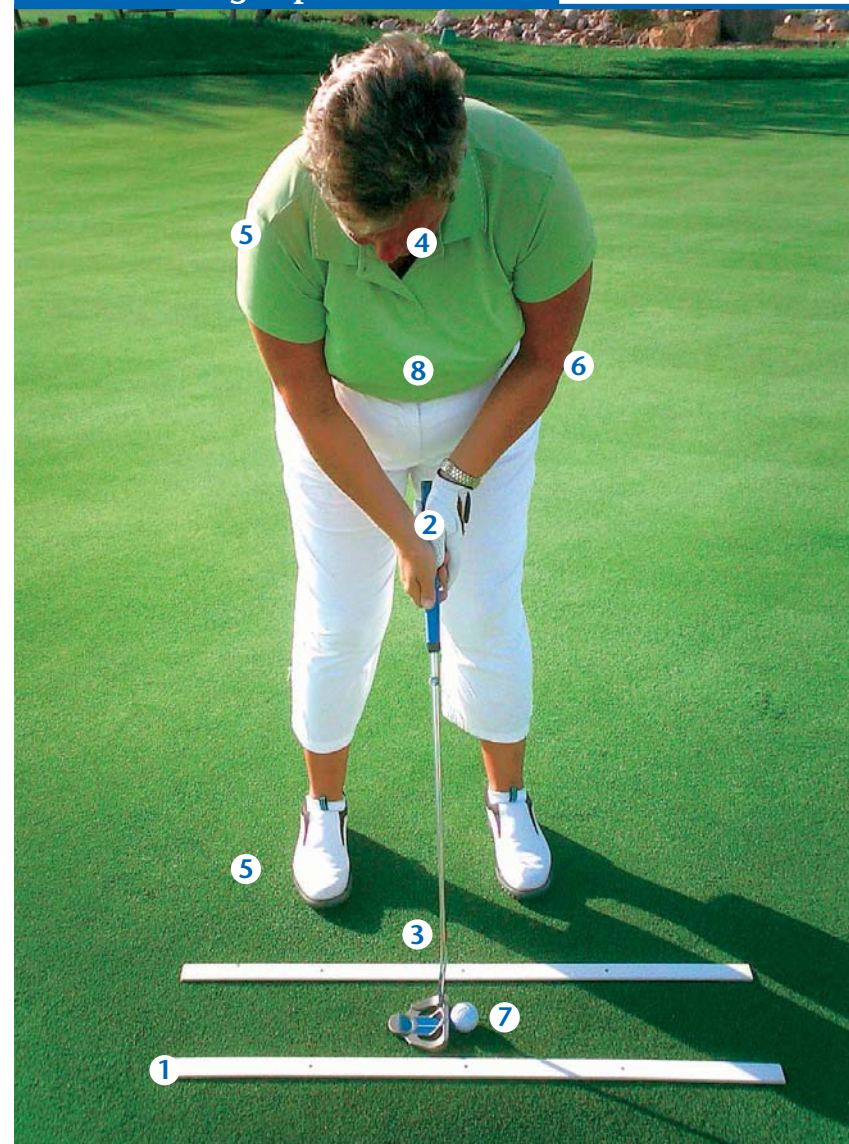
The position of the thumbs is similar to normal – but the grip is in the fingers and the right index finger is extended. Many feel this stabilises the hands – but it actually does the reverse. With the club gripped in the fingers and so much of the right hand dominant the player is able to twitch, twist and turn the club very easily with just an increase in pressure of the right hand.

Quick tip:

Check your grip pressure periodically – those awkward three-footers can cause you to tense up without even realising!



Christine's eight-point checklist



Anyone who watches the pros will know there are a multitude of preferences for grips, stances and ball positions – proving that there is, as always in golf, more than one way to make an omelette. Nevertheless, here are one or two key points that you should try to achieve with your set up if you want to make a good putting stroke.

- 1 Put some clubs down so that you can check your alignment at set-up
- 2 Grip the club in the hands, not the fingers
- 3 Play the ball forward of centre to encourage an upward stroke
- 4 Stand close enough so that your eyes are directly over the ball
- 5 Make sure your feet and shoulder line are parallel to the line of the putt
- 6 Let your arms hang naturally underneath the line of your shoulders
- 7 Focus on the ball, not the stroke
- 8 Keep still!

Christine Langford

Christine Langford oversees ladies' golf at Desert Springs in Almeria, Spain, is an Advanced Fellow of the PGA and coach to Wales ladies.

For details on her golf schools visit www.langford-golf.co.uk or call 01380 813 267. Tel 01242 680 299 or visit www.almanzora.com for information on Desert Springs.

