

Putting can be improved, British researchers say

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The 'Quiet Eye' won't turn an average golfer into Tiger Woods, but it will help with putting, British researchers say. (Richard Heathcote/Getty Images)

British researchers have improved golfers' putting using a technique, called the "Quiet Eye," developed by a Canadian.

Samuel Vine of the University of Exeter and colleagues measured the putting of a group of golfers before and after they'd been taught the Quiet Eye technique. The result: those who learned the Quiet Eye sunk six per cent more of their putts and reduced their average number of putts by two per round.

The researchers then put the same golfers under pressure, competing for a £100 (\$155 Cdn) prize against a second group who had not been taught the technique. The golfers who had learned the Quiet Eye sank 17 per cent more putts than the untrained group.

"Putting is a hugely important part of golf, accounting for around 45 per cent of the shots taken in an average round," Vine said.

The Quiet Eye, credited to University of Calgary Prof. Joan Vickers, involves:

- Shifting the gaze between the ball and the hole before the putt.

- Fixating on the back of the ball for two to three seconds before and during the stroke.
- Keeping the eyes steady for about half a second after the stroke.

"It is effective because it allows the golfer to take in only the necessary visual information required to make the shot," the Exeter researchers said in a news release.

The findings are to be published in the Journal of Applied Sports Psychology.

"Obviously, just keeping your eye on the ball won't make you Tiger Woods overnight," Vine said.

But he added that golfers who change their pre-shot routine and control their vision make more putts.

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at 9:19 AM ET This was demonstrated on Scientific American Frontiers on PBS maybe 8 years ago.

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