

The Putter

Putting is the point where the game is arguably won or lost. Amazing ball strikes, long hits and great short games are everyone's dream, but decent scores are almost impossible without good putting.

The putter is the most used club in the bag. A novice golfer might expect to two-putt every green for 36 putts, while a tour professional would probably expect closer to 28 or 29 as an average putting round. Every round is different, however. Some days the novice player will roll everything in for 29 putts and the pro might miss almost everything for 35 putts. This is what makes putting so frustrating, but also so wonderful. A novice golfer could never regularly hit the ball 300 yards (274 m) into the air like a tour pro, but he or she could knock in a 30-foot (9-meter) putt just like a professional.

Putting brings everyone down to the same level and is based on two key points:

- Line and pace are the main considerations when studying a putt
- Without the right pace, the line is almost irrelevant; without the right line, the pace is also irrelevant

In the end, putting is all about feel and judgment. Technique, relatively speaking, almost takes a back seat.

Design

Manufacturers have created many different designs made from various materials to help the golfer hole putts. Some professionals use the same putter for years; others change every week.



Adjustable weights Because of the variation of green speeds on different courses, it is useful to have a putter with interchangeable weights to help maintain feel.

KEY FEATURES

FACE

A putter's face can vary from a smooth to a milled finish. The latter aids in feel and makes the ball roll earlier.

BACK

The cavity in the rear redistributes the weight closer to the heel and toe, and stops the face from twisting at an off-center strike.

ADDRESS

The marking on the rear of a putter helps players with alignment, ensuring that the face is 90° to the target.

SOLE

Various sole widths are available, but they are usually flat so that the putter sits flat at address.



VARIATIONS IN DESIGN



TaylorMade Tour Burner

This driver has a 450cc head with a deep face for a higher launch. Its light shaft leads to greater clubhead speed.

The shape of the driver has stayed much the same since the birth of golf—it has always been the biggest club in size, volume and depth, thus proving that the original design was the best one. Square-shaped heads have been introduced recently with the concept that by having corners, the weight can be distributed farther behind the heel and toe of the club, giving less twist and producing a more consistent ball flight. Though the science is correct, many believe that the shape of the head has proven to be too dramatic, and most golfers still prefer the original pear shape.



TaylorMade r7 SuperQuad

This 460cc driver has an unusual black head with four movable weights, allowing the player to change trajectory and launch angle. It's low, deep center of gravity promotes long hitting.



Ping GIO This driver has a 460cc head with a slightly thinner crown allowing the weight to be distributed elsewhere. The center of gravity is improved, which gives a higher launch and reduced spin.



Mizuno MX700

This driver has a slightly longer look at the back of the club but is still 460cc. Many modern drivers are very loud because of their hollow heads, but this model includes a vibration-dampening hull that makes it seem more solid and less noisy.



Callaway Big Bertha Diablo

This driver is 460cc and 100 percent titanium. With no hosel, the weight is repositioned in the perimeter of the clubhead to add stability.



Callaway FT 10 This driver is 460cc in size, with a face that is angled one degree closed. The carbon body, titanium face and square shape allow the weight distribution to perfect the center of gravity for maximum distance.

Height

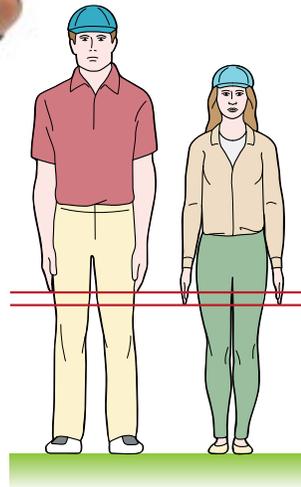
Height differences between men and women lead to large variations in swing. The reduced height in a woman is more likely to result in a flatter posture. This posture causes one major problem: the player tends to stand too tall, creating a flat swing plane.

A flat swing plane results in an angle of attack that is too shallow, leading to a too-clean strike. A reduction

in height and spin, combined with a slower swing speed, can cause problems for many female players; the loss in distance is staggering.

Then and Now

If a comparison is made between female golfers 10–20 years ago and female players today, the physical changes are very noticeable.



Benefits of height A taller player can create a bigger arc, which increases distance, whereas a shorter player has a more compact swing.



Modern female golfers are taller, which aids their posture. They are also more athletic, which helps them rotate better. In addition, the athleticism produces smaller busts, allowing women to swing their arms around their chests without anything getting in the way.

Swing Arc

On average, men are three or four inches (8–10 cm) taller than women and have a wider swing arc. A bigger or wider arc pushes a club farther away from the ball during the swing, so it becomes easier to generate more power. This is a plus for distance; however, with more distance comes less control. So, ultimately, women are known for their controlled shots and men for power and distance.

Modern female golfers In the past 10 years, professional female golfers have changed in appearance and are more athletic, with smaller chests and stronger arms and wrists.

BUST AND OVERSWING

The bust is another factor in the swing of women. It can cause a flat takeaway or backswing, which needs to be altered by the player during the swing (known as a loop), but unless done perfectly it creates a downswing that is much too steep. This action creates a lot of wrist action and very little turn, usually resulting in an overswing. The overswing is an attempt to create more clubhead speed. This can work with men or women who have strong wrists, but generally an overswing produces a deceleration into the ball. Many women benefit more from a shorter backswing and acceleration through impact, using their wrists.



Custom fit The measurement from a player's fingertips to the floor is a big factor in determining club length.

