A Course in Practice

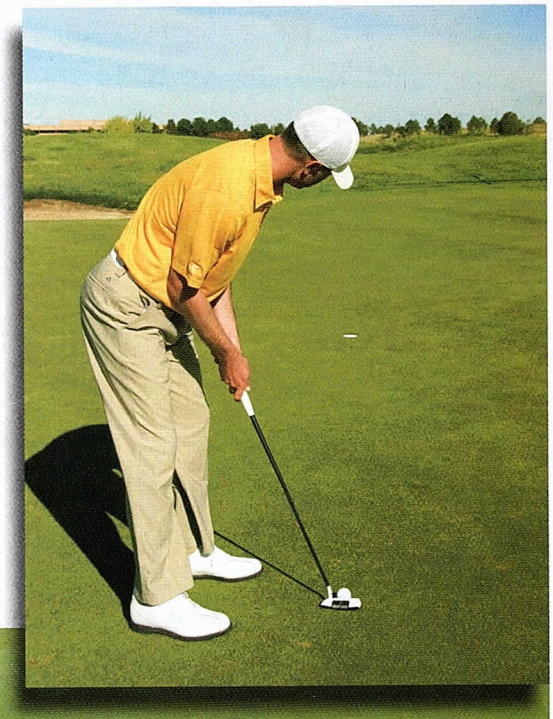
One way to take your game from the range to the first tee.

By Trent Wearner

GOLF IS THE WORST PRACTICED SPORT IN THE WORLD. Unlike other sports—where athletes prepare the skills needed for what will be encountered in a game, event, or match—golfers practice under conditions far easier than what they find on the course: flat lies, multiple tries, no need to get over bad shots, no consequences, no scoring system, no pressure. Technique and mechanics dominate "practice," and this lack of realistic preparation leads to an unbearable amount of pressure and anxiety when on the course.

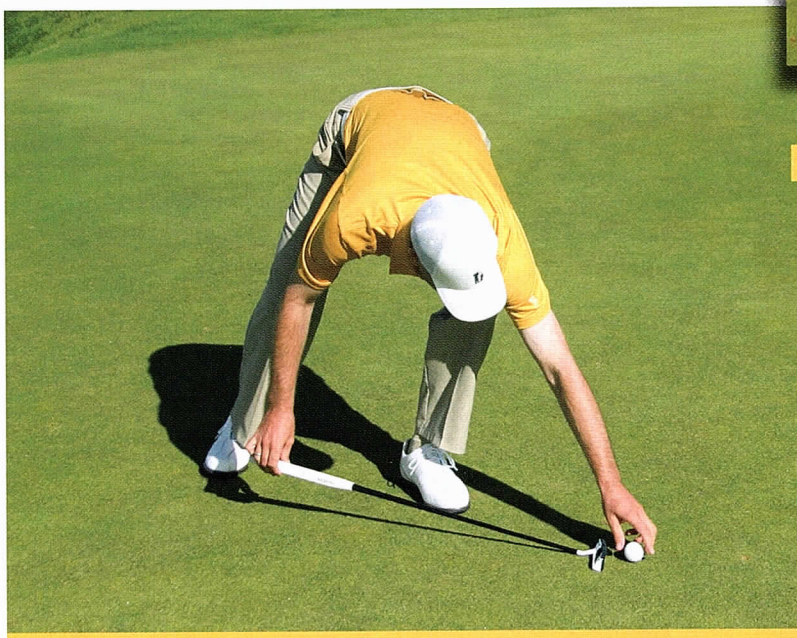
You can't take your practice to the course because you're not bringing the course to practice. Make your practice sessions as similar to—or more challenging than—what you experience on the course. Below is a perfect example of how to do just that with your putting game.

GAME TITLE: PULL BACK



RULES

- On a putting green, start with the first hole 20 feet away, the second hole 30, and the third, 40. Repeat the loop three times for a total of 9 holes
- For each hole, if your first putt goes in the cup you score a one. If it doesn't go in, you must draw the ball back one putter's length in line with the ball and the hole. If that putt goes in, you score a 2. If it misses, you must draw the ball back one putter's length again continuing in this same manner until you hole the putt. Total the number of putts it takes you on all nine holes and try to lower it the next time you play.You can also track these practice games at *golfscrimmages.com*



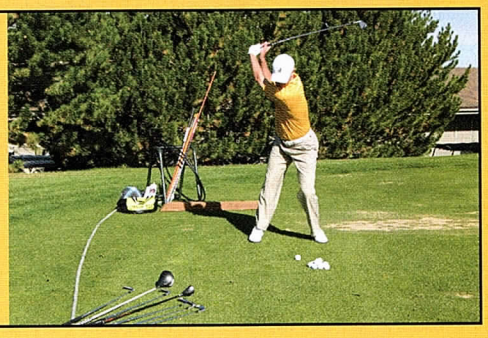
BENEFITS

1. Your attitude on each of your first putts will begin to change from trying to lag it to trying to hole it.
2. It's inevitable that you'll have a number of short putts that you'll be grinding on because you don't want to miss because there's no guarantee of an easy tap-in
3. When playing an actual round on the course you obviously won't draw the ball back. This makes your on-course play feel easier and anytime it feels easier on the course you know you've done something great for your game during practice.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEREMY CANTALAMESSA

Swing Sequence ››››››››››››››››››

Everybody wants to string good shots together during a round. So try to do the same on the range—but NOT with the same club. Instead, vow this year to switch clubs with every ball you hit. It'll make a huge difference in your on-course performance. For more games, visit *golfscrimmages.com*.



Trent Wearner recently won his second Colorado PGA Teacher of the Year award and was also rated by his peers as the #1 Teacher in Colorado as published by Golf Digest. *He has also joined an elite group of teachers as a Golf Channel Academy Lead Coach. He has had 24 students qualify to play in National USGA Events, and eight High School State Champions including four in the last four years. TrentWearnerGolf.com or GolfScrimmages.com; 303-645-8000.*