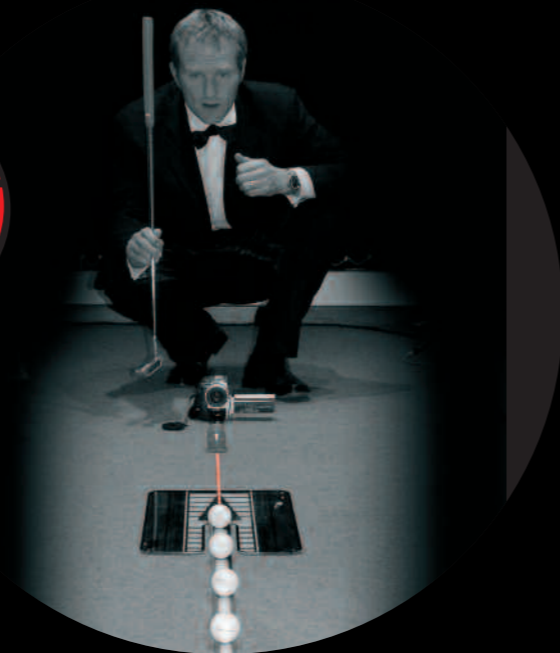
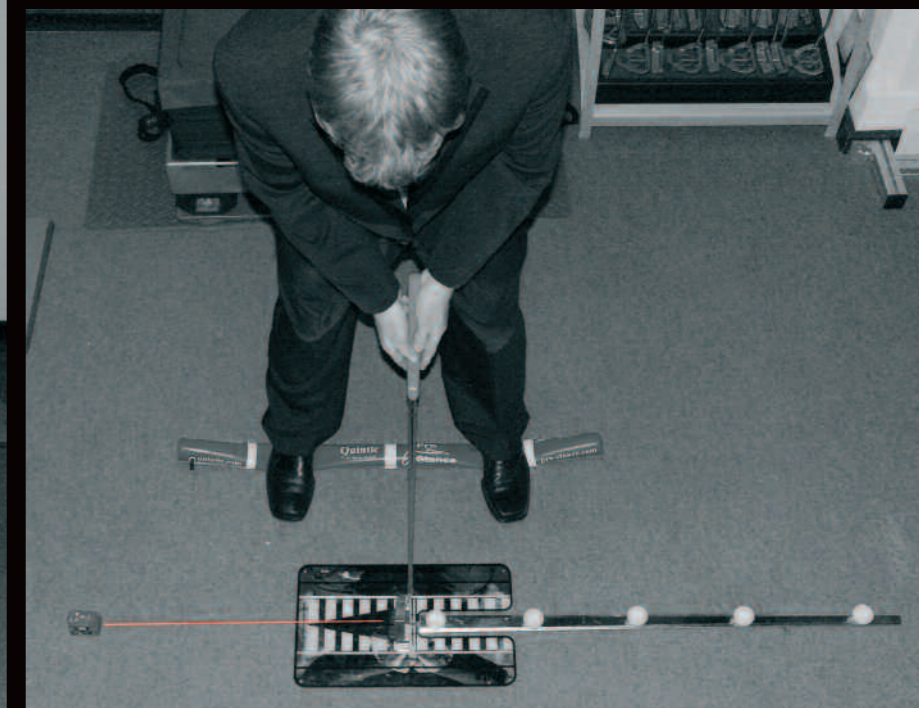


007
BOND
& GOLF



Shine a light on the correct alignment of your eyes and the putter-face and you can hole out with the assurance and ruthlessness of a cold assassin



OPERATION

LASER SURGERY

By our special agent
Dr Paul Hurrion
SHOT ON LOCATION AT QUINTIC

MATCHING PERCEPTION WITH REALITY

Our laboratory at the Quintic facility here in Warwickshire is kitted out with the sort of gadgetry that wouldn't look out of place in Q's underground workshop. But for all the sophistication of the high-tech video reconnaissance equipment, a simple builder's laser and trusty putting mirror are by far and away the most important gadgets that a golfer could wish for in terms of keeping his or her putting stroke in order.

I am not giving away any trade secrets when I tell you that the correct alignment of the eyes and the putter-face is vital in the process of developing and repeating the mechanics of a sound putting stroke. And yet it's no exaggeration to say that upwards of 90% of the golfers who pass this way (most of them top amateurs and professionals) display fundamental flaws in their alignment that demand some sort of compensation in the stroke itself. In other words, they are simply not aiming the putter where they think they are.

The simple procedure you see me demonstrating here is designed to confirm both the alignment of the putter-face and the position of the eye-line above the ball. And if you are serious about improving your putting over the winter, then my advice is get yourself kitted out and follow these rules.

YOU WILL NEED:

BUILDER'S LASER approximately £5.99 (B&Q, Homebase)

PUTTING MIRROR (available through my website www.paulhurrion.com)

THE PUTTING RAIL (optional – also available from my website)

The objective of this lesson is to confirm that the alignment of your eyes and the putter-face is *absolutely square to your target line*. How many golfers use a line on the ball to align to the target (or even the manufacturer's logo?). I would imagine the majority of you have tried it at least once? You have a six-foot putt with the line at the right edge, for example, and you align the line on the ball at the right edge of the hole as you study the putt from behind. Everything looks good. You go through your pre-putt routine and align the putter-face behind the ball. Then, one final look at the hole... but suddenly the line on the ball isn't aiming at the right edge of the hole anymore. It's aiming straight or even left half! Help! You either back off and check the line on the ball or you end up pushing the putter and manipulating its path.

Why didn't the line on the ball match the target line? Simple: PERCEPTION didn't match reality.

As I mentioned above, one of the biggest problems in putting is that of misaligning the putter-face. But with the help of this practice station that is impossible. The reflection in the mirror allows you to get your eye-line perfectly square to the target line, while the perpendicular lines on the mirror help you to set the putter-face square to the target line. I use the laser beam to help me lay a line of balls towards a target, creating a striking visual of a six-foot putt. When I then set myself into position over the ball I know that

I am looking at the perfect line to the hole – if this line appears in any way distorted it's because I have been mis-aligning for some time and need to recalibrate my sights.

The key to this exercise is to ensure that when in putting posture your perception of the line of balls is straight! PERCEPTION must equal REALITY, otherwise you will end up having to manipulate the putter-face during the stroke. Often it is a case of moving the eye position over the top of the ball, however in some cases (look at Justin Leonard!) the eyes are inside the ball. It is totally individual. The key is that you see the line of balls in a straight line to your target.

Rehearsing this three or four times a week for 10 or 15 minutes at a time is all it takes to identify with a true line to your target and aim your putter-face along it.

That is the ultimate function of the set-up position, and the more often you rehearse the routine by which you get yourself into a good set up position, the better you will be. I use this drill with Padraig Harrington and my players to enable correct alignment and visual perception. The Putting Rail is a great tool to check this element of his set up. Rolling a ball along the full length of the rail is a skill in itself and requires hours of practice. Can you start the ball on the line you have read without any manipulation?

Padraig's current record stands at 32 in a row...

