

By Sean Weir - [PutterZone.com](http://PutterZone.com)



Much is made these days about the concept of putter fitting, in which the length, loft, lie and weight of a putter are carefully matched to your personal physique and mechanics.

But before you get fit for a putter, you may want to consider the putting philosophy of the person doing the fitting. For example, some putting instructors advocate that you get your eyes directly over the ball, while others suggest that your eyes should be inside the target line.

So what one person considers a good “fit” for a more upright setup will be different from a good “fit” according to someone who advocates a more bent-over, eyes-over-the-ball setup. Indeed, the former requires a longer putter, while the latter requires a shorter putter.

So the putting theory changes the fit—an interesting topic, and one that’s not discussed enough.

On that note, we reached out to leading putting instructor Pat O’Brien to talk about his own approach to putting, and specifically some of the old putting “rules” that may be on their way to becoming exceptions.

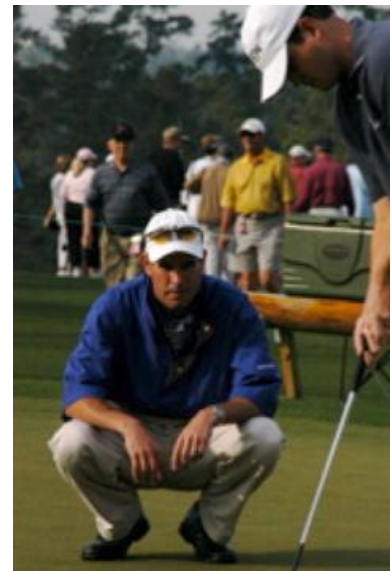
We’ll start with the notion that your eyes should be directly “over the ball” and thus right over the target line, a bedrock of traditional putting instruction. Here’s what Pat has to say on the subject:

“There’s been a paradigm shift in the last 20 years or so. Greens are now more manicured and faster. Back in the day, greens were slower and more grainy, so the style was more of a wrist stroke, or pop stroke. Go back and look at old footage from the ‘60s and even ‘70s, and guys were more bent over, and they popped it, and the ball wouldn’t go too far past the hole because the greens were slower.

Well, the easiest way to get yourself in a position to make that stroke is to get your eyes over the ball, because then your hands and arms are trapped underneath your chest, so you can’t swing your shoulders very freely, and it’s more of a small-muscle stroke.

But if you look at the best putters of the past 20 years, and the guys that come to mind would be Greg Norman, Brad Faxon, Tiger Woods, Zach Johnson, these are guys that stand up to the ball. They have good posture, they are very athletic. And I would venture to say that their eyes are anywhere from the heel of the putter to an inch or two inside of that.

To me, it’s a function of posture, and certainly length of putter. So my benchmark is this: if the putter is properly fitted so that you can be in good posture, relaxed, without straining, then I think your eyes should be a couple of inches inside the ball. The heel of the putter is a good reference point for me. In other words, if you are set up to putt and then take a marble and drop it from one of your eyes, it will land just inside the heel of the putter, not on or in line with the golf ball.”



Stay tuned for additional insights from Pat O'Brien as we continue this series later this week.

Pat O'Brien is the putting instructor to Zach Johnson (pictured above with Pat), Vaughn Taylor and other PGA Tour professionals. He is also a consultant to the SeeMore Putter Company. Pat advocates a natural, fairly upright posture; a grip that places the putter in the fingers; and a stroke that moves on a natural arc. For more information on Pat's approach, visit his excellent blog at [www.patobriengolf.com](http://www.patobriengolf.com).