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Mark O'Meara consistently ranks as one of the top five putting leaders on the PGA Tour.

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Putting with confidence

By [Patrick Cohn](#)
GolfWeb Columnist

Most amateur players neglect practicing their putting before a round. They arrive at the course ten minutes before tee time, put on their shoes and walk directly to the first tee without getting a feel for the greens.

After three-putting the first two greens, they wonder why they putt so poorly. Professionals never play a competitive round without a routine warm-up. Putting serves three important purposes: It helps focus your mind, instill confidence and gain a feel for the speed of the greens.

The warm-up should also be used to build confidence and reassure yourself that you can make putts. You have to feel comfortable before you go to the course. If you're comfortable with the greens, you'll putt with more confidence. You gain a sense of comfort on the practice green. Your real test comes when you hit the first putt on the course. Did you hit it solid? Did it have good speed? Did you pick the right line?

Most importantly, a warm-up helps you test the speed and break of the green and develop a sense of touch. The speed and texture of putting greens vary from course to course. Types of grasses, grains, undulations, and length affect the speed and texture. Even the speed of the greens on your home course can change daily, depending on how the greens were cut or weather conditions. If you play different courses, your biggest challenge is to adjust

to the speed of the greens. The pre-round warm-up may be the only time you have to adjust your touch.

Here are five steps to work into your putting warm-up.

#1: Hit the ball solid

Most great putters talk about how hitting the ball solid on the sweet spot of the putter is a source of confidence. This is important because how solid you hit your putts determine the roll of the ball and how far the ball rolls. The more solid you hit the putt the better it stays on line as the ball rolls end over end. Hit a few balls solidly across the green without a target in mind.



By practicing your putting warm-up, you can develop confidence like Annika Sörenstam

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#2: Tune-up your touch

The most important aspect of a putting warm-up is to get a feel for the speed of the greens. Controlling your pace and the ability to lag the ball close from long range is critical to your confidence and making breaking putts. Also, most three and four-putts are caused by a lack of touch and not gauging the speed of the green properly. I suggest hitting some long putts to the fringe of the green and paying attention to how fast or slow the ball rolls.

#3: Create success pictures

To take confidence to the course, you want to have strong images of the ball going into the hole. You want to see, feel, and hear the ball go in the cup to create strong image. This gives you a feeling of comfort when you get on the first green. You never want to practice "missing" before you play. Start at two feet and hit several putts in the hole. Then move to three feet and repeat the process.

#4: Click in your focus

The putting warm-up is an excellent time to get your game face on. It helps you focus on the cues that are important for performance. Focus on reading the green, visualizing a line, and seeing the ball roll into the cup. Now is not the time to work on your stroke mechanics.

#5: Warm-up your mind

This is the time to get comfortable with your pre-putt

routine. Make sure you hit three or four putts from about 10 feet using your full pre-putt routine. You use your routine on the course, so you should start warming up your routine on the practice green. This will also help your concentration on the course.

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