



US 20130231199A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Stockton et al.

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2013/0231199 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Sep. 5, 2013**

(54) **GOLF PUTTING TRAINING DEVICE AND METHOD**

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
USPC 473/157; 473/409

(76) Inventors: **Dave Stockton**, Redlands, CA (US);
Ron Stockton, Redlands, CA (US); **Tom Covino**, San Antonio, TX (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

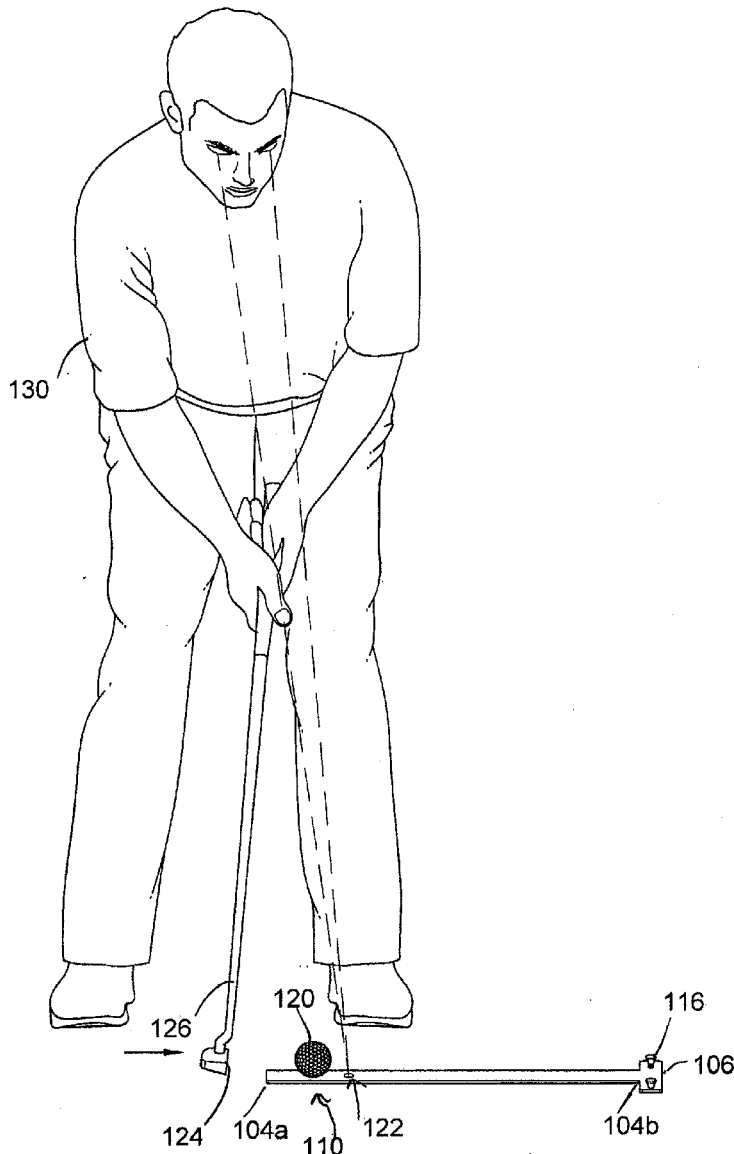
A putting training device having an elongate section with a ball receiving area and a visual target reference or aim point that is positioned in the desired direction of travel of the golf ball. The visual target reference is located a distance from the golf ball receiving area that is selected so that a golfer can focus on the visual target reference when making their swing, thus maintaining their attention on the desired direction of travel of the ball to improve their aim while still being able to see the orientation of the head of the putter during the latter portion of the golfer's stroke and as it hits the ball to be able to provide better club control during the putting swing.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/410,063**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 1, 2012**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63B 69/36 (2006.01)



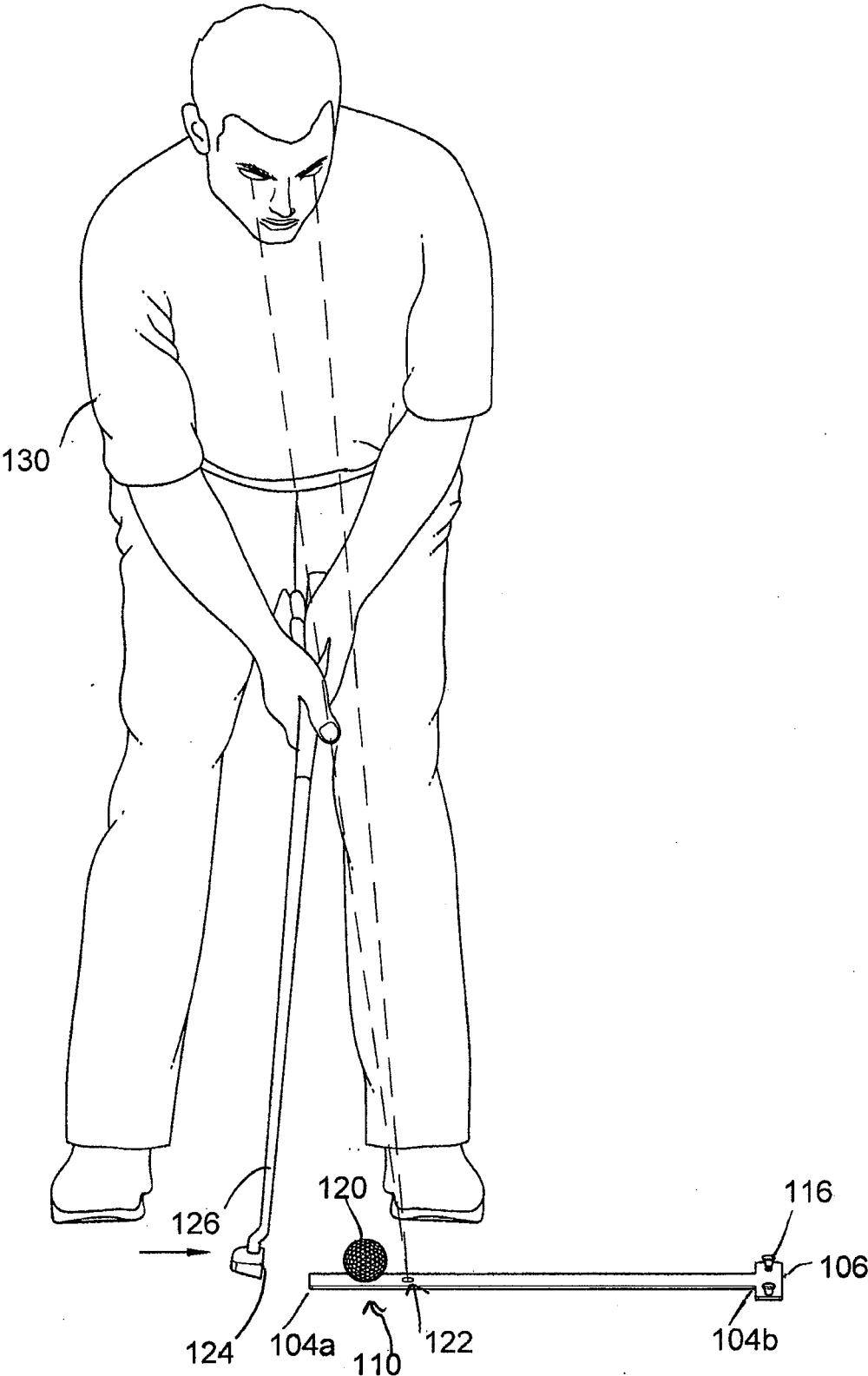


Fig. 1

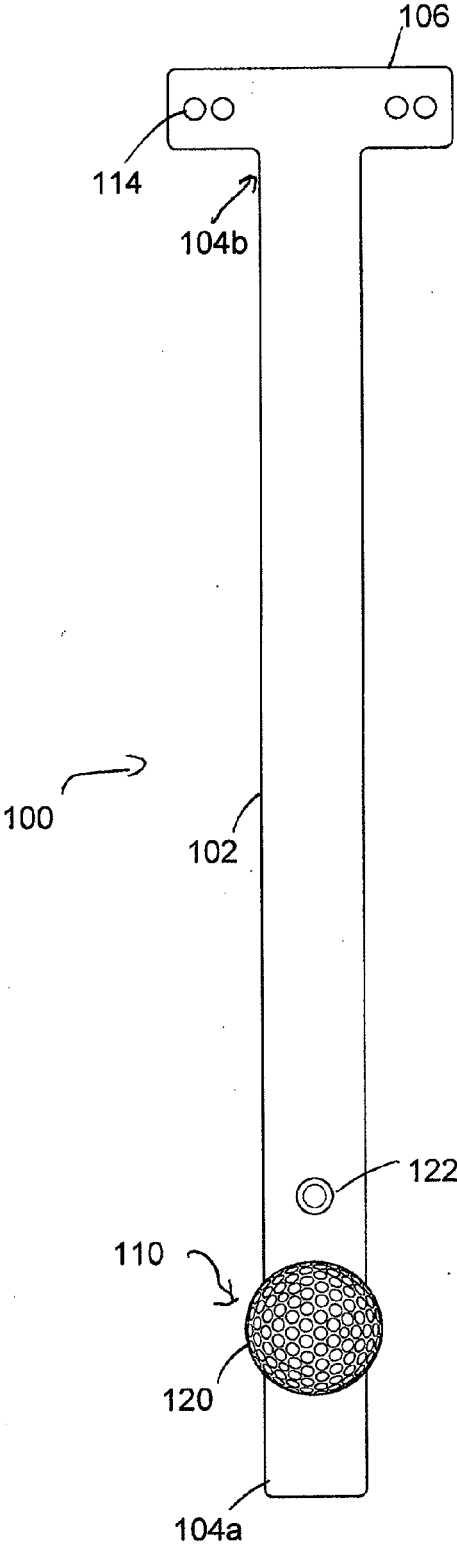


Fig. 2

GOLF PUTTING TRAINING DEVICE AND METHOD

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to golfing training devices and methods and, in particular, concerns a method and device for teaching a more effective way of putting a golf ball.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Golfing is one of the most popular sports in the developed world. Golfing generally has several components to the game including longer drives shots on the fairway and putting shots on the green. Putting is a particularly challenging aspect of the game of golf as the golf ball has to be hit in a much more precise manner to have the ball go into the hole. Thus, many golfers spend a tremendous amount of time trying to perfect their putting technique.

[0005] One difficulty that many golfers have when putting is ensuring that the putter will strike the golf ball to induce the ball to travel in the desired direction. When golfers look directly at the ball when performing their putting stroke to ensure that the club hits the ball in the desired position and orientation of the club, they are not looking in the desired direction of travel which means that the golfer may inadvertently adjust their putting stroke so that the club hits the ball in an undesired direction.

[0006] Alternatively, if the golfer is looking at the actual target when performing a putting stroke, the golfer may inadvertently mis-hit the ball. This can occur by the golfer hitting the ball with the club head slightly askew or hitting the ball not on the desired location of the club head. It is a particular problem that many golfers have that they look up towards the hole as they are putting which causes golfers to misadjust their swing resulting in the putted ball not travelling in the direction desired by the golfer.

[0007] To assist golfers in perfecting their putting swing so that the competing objectives of precisely hitting the ball with the desired part of the club while maintaining the club swing so that the golf ball travels in a desired direction, a number of golf training devices have been developed. One such device is shown in U.S. Patent Publication No. 20080102970 A1 to Park entitled Indoor Golf Putting Training Apparatus. In this apparatus, the golfer looks at collimation points that are located substantially in front of the golf ball position. Park endeavors to try to prevent the golfer from looking even further away from the golf ball by looking at the hole. However, in Park, the collimating point is located 20 to 30 cm or almost 8 to 12 inches in front of the ball placement. Thus, the golfer is focusing so far in front of the ball, that the golfer does not really have the golf club head in his or her peripheral vision when the golf club head is approaching the stationary ball. Thus, the golfer will still have the difficulty of not being able to precisely see the golf club head as it approaches the ball to strike the ball and the golfer cannot make last minute adjustments to his or her swing. Consequently, even though Park is attempting to address the issue of golfers looking away at the target, Park is doing so in a manner that still introduces sources of error in the golf swing.

[0008] From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that there is a need for a golf club training device and method that allows the user to focus their attention on putting a golf ball in a

desired direction while still maintaining the golf club head and the golf ball in their peripheral vision as the golfer performs his or her swing.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The aforementioned needs are satisfied by a golf club training device of the present invention which, in one implementation, comprises a flat strip having a golf ball receiving location formed in a first location adjacent a first end of the strip and a target reference point located in the direction of travel of the golf ball and spaced from the golf ball receiving location a distance selected to retain the golf ball in the peripheral vision of the golfer as the golfer conducts his or her golf swing. In one specific implementation, the target reference point is located a distance of only 1 to 2 inches in front of the golf ball receiving location.

[0010] In one specific embodiment, the strip defines a straight line that coincides with the direction of travel of the golf ball so that the golfer can putt the golf ball along the strip and determine if the putt was successful by observing whether the golf ball travelled in a straight line the length of the strip. In one specific embodiment, the strip is approximately 18 inches long. In one specific embodiment, the end of the strip opposite the golf ball receiving area comprises a T-section. The T-section defines a target through which the golfer can putt the ball and also has securing holes that allows the golfer to secure the training device to the ground in a desired orientation. The securing holes can be secured with golf tees which provide an easy securing assembly with conveniently available tees and the tees can provide a vertically extending target for the golfer to easily see to putt the ball through.

[0011] In another embodiment, the present invention comprises a method of training a golfer to putt a golf ball. In this method, the golfer positions a golf ball on a training strip having a golf ball receiving location. The golfer then looks at a target reference spaced in the desired direction of travel and located so as that when the golfer is looking at the target reference the golf ball remains in the golfer's peripheral field of vision. In one implementation, the target reference is located approximately 1 to 2 inches in front of the ball receiving area.

[0012] These and other objects and advantages will become more apparent from the following description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is a side perspective view of one embodiment of a putting training device and method of the present invention; and

[0014] FIG. 2 is a top view of the putting training device of the FIG. 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0015] Reference will now be made to the drawings wherein like numerals refer to like parts throughout. Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, a putting training device 100 is illustrated. In one implementation, the putting training device 100 has an elongate section 102 having a first and a second end 104a, 104b. The putting training device 100 also includes a cross section 106 that is attached to the second end 104b of the first elongate section 102. A ball receiving area 110 compris-

ing, for example, a hole or recess that is sized to stably receive a golf ball **120** is formed adjacent the first end **104a** of the elongate section **102**.

[0016] In one implementation, the hole or recess forming the ball receiving area **110** is a hole that is drilled to a diameter of 0.085 cm (or 0.033 inches) that will allow the ball to be retained on the elongate section **102** but not significantly recessed in the hole or opening such that the ball would be impeded from leaving the hole or recess as a result of a putting stroke. The exact dimensions can, of course, vary without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention.

[0017] The ball receiving area **110** is preferably located at the center of the elongate member **102**. The elongate member **102** is preferably sized to be slightly wider than a golf ball to permit the golf ball to travel down the elongate member **102** in response to a correctly applied putting stroke. In one implementation, the elongate member **102** is sized so as to be approximately 1¼ inches wide (or approximately 3.175 cm wide) and approximately 17 inches long (or approximately 43.18 cm long). A cross section **106** is attached to the second end **104b** of the elongate member **102** and is sized, in this exemplary implementation, to be approximately 1 inch (approximately 2.54 cm) thick in the direction of the elongate member **102** and extend in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the elongate member **102** approximately 3.5 inches (approximately 8.89 cm). Again, the dimensions of the elongate member **102**, the cross member **106** and various other components illustrated here can vary without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0018] The cross member **106** includes a plurality of securing holes **114** that can be used to secure the training device **100** to the ground through the use of securing devices **116** such as golf tees as is shown in FIG. 1. As will be described in greater detail below, the securing devices **116** extend upwards from the upper surface of the cross member **106** so as to provide a visual target for the golfer to try to putt a golf ball **120** through.

[0019] In one implementation, the elongate member **102** and the cross member **106** are formed as a single integrated unit however they can also be separate pieces that are interconnected without departing from the spirit of the present invention. The device **100** can also be formed of material such as acrylic or Plexiglas having thicknesses on the order of approximately ½ of an inch (approximately 0.0049 cm) but can be formed of any suitable material of a desired thickness without departing from the spirit of the present invention.

[0020] As is also shown in FIGS. 1 and 2, the elongate section **102** also includes a visual target reference or aim point **122** that is placed immediately in front of the ball **120**. The visual target reference preferably is approximately sized to be ⅔ of an inch in diameter. As will be described in greater detail below, the visual target reference is spaced a distance from the golf ball that is selected to force the golfer to not focus on the ball **120** but to focus on a spot in the desired direction of travel of the ball **120**. Moreover, the visual target reference **122** is still positioned close enough to the ball **120** such that the golfer, even when focusing on the visual target reference **122**, still sees the ball **120** and the head **124** of the putter **126** as the golfer **130** swings through a putting stroke and contacts the ball **120**. By being able to see the head **124** of the putter **126** as it approaches the ball **120** in his or her peripheral vision, the golfer is better able to ensure that the head **124** of the putter **126** is striking the ball **120** in the desired orientation and location to ensure that the ball travels in the precise desired

direction. Further, the visual target reference **122** should be smaller than the diameter of the ball **120** but should not be so small that the user has to focus on the reference **122** to accurately see it. In this way, the reference **122** is not a distraction for the golfer but is still large enough that the golfer can easily see the reference **122**.

[0021] In one specific implementation, the visual target reference **122** is located approximately 1 to 3 inches (approximately 2.54 cm to 7.62 cm), or more specifically approximately 1 to 2 inches (approximately 2.54 cm to 5.08 cm), in front of the golf ball receiving area **110**. In one specific embodiment, the visual target reference **122** is a circular reference and the center point of the circle is located approximately 1.81 inches (approximately 4.6 cm) in front of the center of the ball receiving area **110**. At these distances, when the golfer is swinging the putter **126** towards the ball **120**, the orientation of the head **124** of the putter **126** and the location where the head **124** of the putter **126** will hit the ball **120** can be seen in the golfer's peripheral vision thereby allowing the golfer to observe the club head hitting the ball but without requiring the golfer to focus on the ball.

[0022] Further, the visual target reference **122** is positioned in the desired direction of travel of the ball **120**. Thus, the golfer can simultaneously focus attention on the desired direction of travel of the golf ball **120**, thereby improving the aim of the ball, while also being able to observe the relationship between the club head **124** of the putter **126** and the ball **120** during the swing of the club **126** and contact with the ball **120**. By being able to accomplish both tasks, the golfer can practice his or her putting stroke more accurately and then utilize this method of putting for greater accuracy.

[0023] More specifically, when the golfer is golfing even not using the device **100**, the golfer can be trained by the device **100** to select a spot on the green located about the same distance in front of the ball receiving area **110** as the visual target reference **122**. The selected spot on the green should be selected to be in the direct desired line of travel of the ball **120** towards the hole or elsewhere. The golfer then focuses on this spot while putting thereby allowing the golfer to both be looking at a spot along the desired direction of travel and also simultaneously observing the orientation of the head **124** of the putter **126** as it approaches and contacts the ball **120**. Consequently, the device **100** can lead to a putting method that results in greater accuracy for the golfer.

[0024] As discussed above, a further benefit of the device **100** as training device results from the use of the securing devices **116** on the cross piece member **106**. The securing devices define vertical obstacles that are positioned on either side of the desired direction of travel of the ball **120**. If the golfer is successfully able to putt the ball **120** in a straight line down the elongate section and through the vertical obstacles, then the golfer knows that he or she has hit the ball **120** in the desired direction of travel. If the ball **120** rolls off the elongate member **102** or hits the securing devices **116**, then the golfer is provided feedback that the head **124** of the putter **126** hit the ball **120** in the wrong location or that the swing of the putter was not extending in a direction that is parallel to the long axis of the elongate member **102** which coincides with the desired direction of travel of the ball **120**.

[0025] A further advantage of the device **100** over existing devices is that the device **100** is small, lightweight and easy to use. As discussed above, it can even be secured to the ground for practice on a practice green and the like using golf tees which most golfers will have in their bag. Thus, the device

provides an inexpensive training device that can be carried in a golfer's golf bag and used in an easy and convenient fashion.

[0026] While the foregoing description has shown, illustrated and described various novel features and uses of the present invention, a person of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that various changes, modifications and substitutions to the form of the apparatus and methods can be made without departing from the spirit, teachings and scope of the present invention. Hence, the scope of the present invention should not be limited to the foregoing discussion but should be defined by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A golf training device comprising an elongate member having a first and a second end, and defining an axis that extends along the elongate member; a golf ball receiving area formed in the elongate member adjacent the first end; a visual target reference formed on the elongate member and spaced a selected distance from the golf ball receiving area along the axis of the elongate member, wherein the spaced selected distance is selected so that a golfer sees the club head of the putter as it approaches a ball in the golfer's peripheral vision when the golfer is focusing on the visual target reference.
2. The device of claim 1, wherein the golf ball receiving area comprises a recess.
3. The device of claim 3, wherein the recess is circular and has a dimension of 0.85 cm.
4. The device of claim 1, wherein the visual target reference is formed to be approximately 1 to 2 inches from the ball receiving area along the axis of the elongate member.
5. The device of claim 4, wherein the visual target reference is approximately 1.81 inches from the golf ball receiving area and has a diameter of approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch.
6. The device of claim 1, wherein the elongate member is sized so that a golf ball that is not hit so as to travel along the direction of the axis of the elongate member rolls off of the elongate member before reaching the second end.
7. The device of claim 6, wherein the elongate member is approximately 17 inches long and is approximately $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide.

8. The device of claim 1, further comprising a golf ball and a putter.

9. The device of claim 1, further comprising a cross piece attached to the second end of the elongate member wherein the cross piece extends in a second direction that is perpendicular to the axis of the elongate member.

10. The device of claim 9, wherein the cross piece defines openings located on the outer sides of the elongate member and wherein securing devices can be positioned within the openings to secure the device to the ground and so that the securing devices define a target area in the desired direction of travel of the ball for the golfer to aim to hit the ball through.

11. The device of claim 9, wherein the cross piece is integrally attached to the elongate member.

12. The device of claim 9, wherein the cross piece extends approximately 1 inch in the axis of the elongate member and approximately 3.5 inches in a direction that is perpendicular to the axis of the elongate member.

13. A method of training a person to putt a golf ball comprising:

- positioning a golf ball in a first location;
- identifying a visual target reference at a second location along a desired direction of travel of the golf ball wherein the second location is spaced from the first location by a distance that allows the golfer to focus on the second location while peripherally observing the first location as the golfer swings the putter;
- swinging the putter while focusing on the second location.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the second location is approximately 1 to 2 inches from the first location.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the visual target reference is approximately 1.81 inches from the first location and has a diameter of approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch.

16. The method of claim 13, wherein the first and second locations are both formed on an elongate member that defines an axis that coincides with the desired direction of travel of the golf ball.

17. The method of claim 14 further comprising forming a target along the desired direction of travel of the golf ball.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein the target comprises two vertically extending golf tees.

* * * * *