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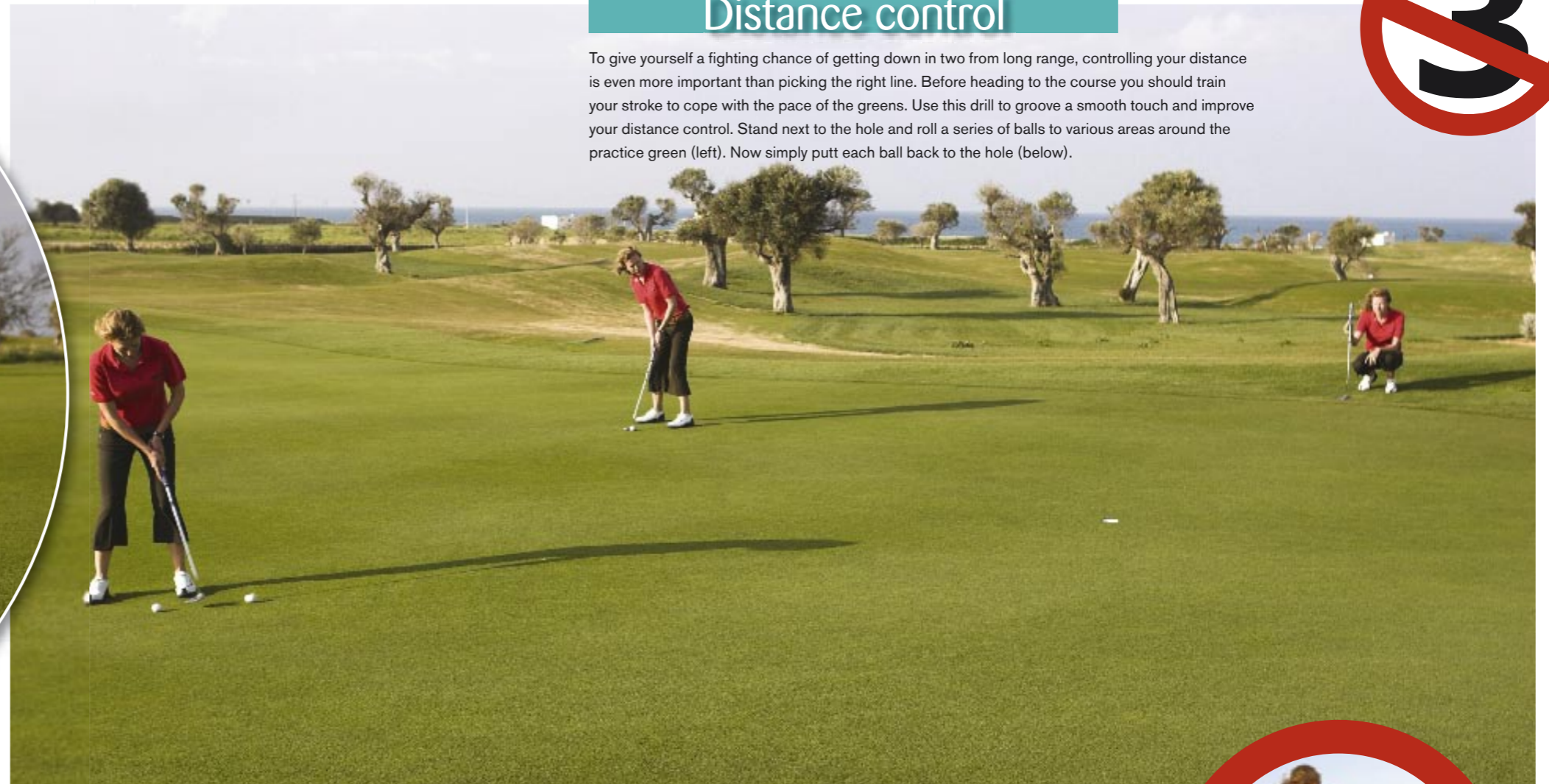
No more 3-putts

You hit a solid drive into the middle of the fairway and a decent approach – but then take another three strokes to get the ball in the hole. We've all done it but is there anything in golf more frustrating than a three-putt? The following pages are filled with hints and tips guaranteed to boost your confidence and cut your scores on the green



Distance control

To give yourself a fighting chance of getting down in two from long range, controlling your distance is even more important than picking the right line. Before heading to the course you should train your stroke to cope with the pace of the greens. Use this drill to groove a smooth touch and improve your distance control. Stand next to the hole and roll a series of balls to various areas around the practice green (left). Now simply putt each ball back to the hole (below).



Close-range drill

Once you've rolled the ball close from distance you need to finish the job off – this drill will help. Measure a putter's-length away from the hole and mark with a tee. Place another tee a further putter's-length away. Repeat this process to form a cross on the green as shown. Now try to hole a putt from each of the tee "stations". Recreate on-course pressure by continuing until you have completed a full "circuit" without missing.



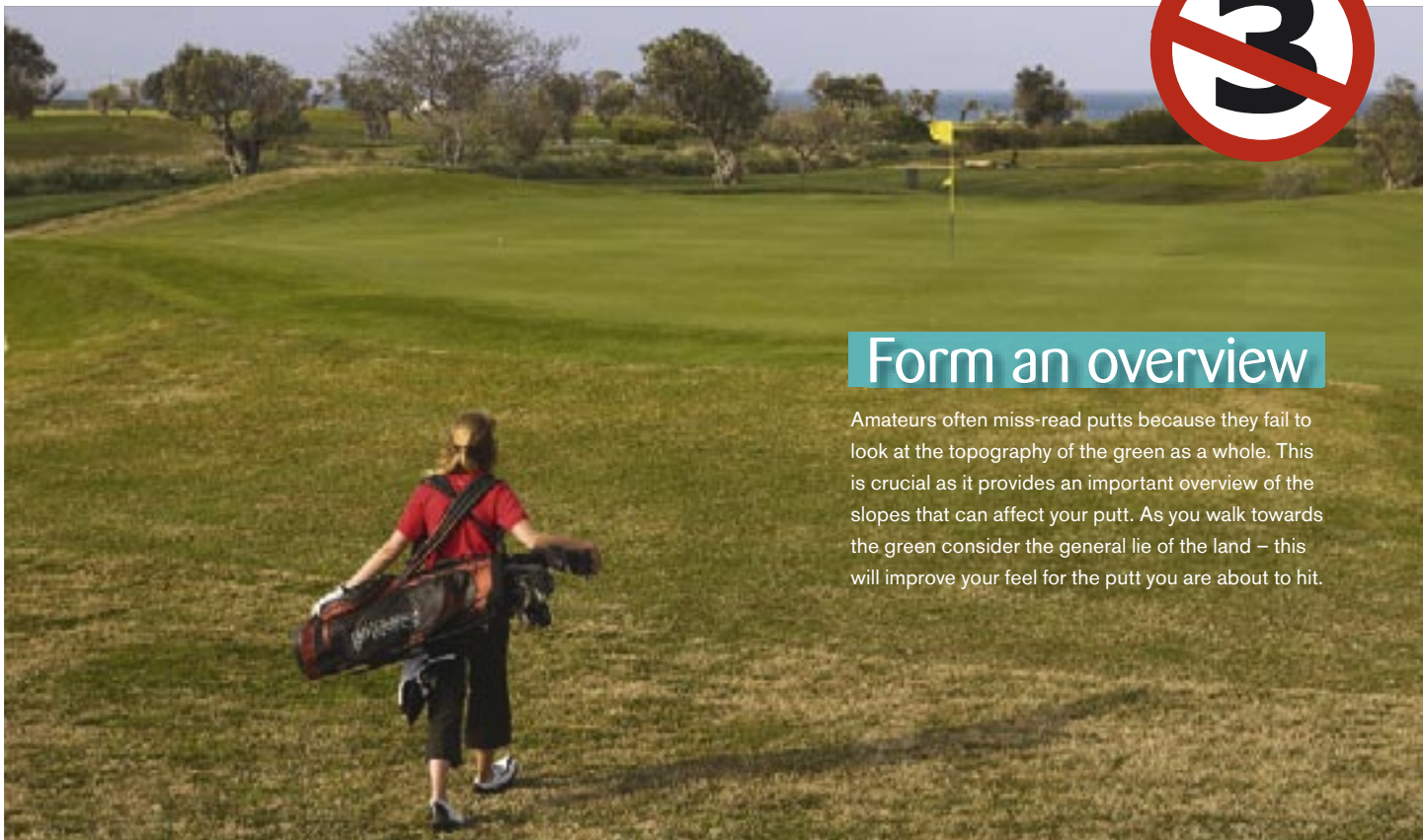
Line it up

If you can groove a "straight back and through" stroke, you are guaranteed to hole out regularly from inside 10ft. To help focus your mind on this simple movement, draw a straight line on your ball as shown. Place the ball on the green so your marking points directly at the hole and concentrate on swinging the putterhead through on this line.



Fluid striking

We are always told about the importance of accelerating our hands through impact to create a positive strike. But this thought often translates into a jerky movement that lacks fluidity and control. Concentrate on swinging the putterhead back and through the same distance. Don't break your wrists – simply increasing the pace of the stroke slightly during the downswing.



Form an overview

Amateurs often miss-read putts because they fail to look at the topography of the green as a whole. This is crucial as it provides an important overview of the slopes that can affect your putt. As you walk towards the green consider the general lie of the land – this will improve your feel for the putt you are about to hit.

Mind over matter

You need to prepare your mind and body for the putt you are about to hit. Picture the ball rolling towards the hole. Imagine that you are bowling it towards the target – this will help you improve your feel for the distance.



Before you address the ball stand back, look at the hole and make four or five practice swings. By watching the target as you swing, you'll become accustomed to the strength of stroke required.



Above all, be positive. Always concentrate when holing out and do not allow any negative thoughts to provoke a tentative prod at the ball.