

# SportsVision MAGAZINE

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**Essential skills:** Dr. Greg Rose (red), Dr. Robert Jacobs (green) and golf pro Dave Phillips (blue) discuss the visual skills needed in golf.



**Alignment drill:** Testing Phillips' vision alignment from the set-up position, Jacobs drags a golf tee across until it intersects the putting line.

## VISION FITNESS

How to test and correct your depth perception and alignment skills

by Doug Rappaport

Two visual skills that can have a big impact on your golf game are: depth perception and eye alignment. The worse these skills are, the more you stand to gain by doing a little work to improve them.

In the Golf Fitness Academy's 2006 episode on vision, co-hosts Dr. Greg Rose and Dave Phillips, with the assistance of McLean, Virginia-based sports vision optometrist Dr. Robert Jacobs, explained how to test and develop these skills. Here are a few of their suggestions.

### Depth Perception

**How to test.** You can test your depth perception with a simple string and a bead, known as a brock string. Hold one end of the string up to your nose and have a teammate or coach hold the other end at eye level, about seven to eight feet away, with the bead resting at the end of the string. Alternatively, you can tie the far end of the string onto a fixture.

Hold the string up to your nose and focus both eyes on the bead. As you keep your eyes focused on the bead, you should begin to see two strings. One of the strings is being seen by your left eye, while the other is being seen by your right eye. If you only see one string (or if one of the strings keeps disappearing), it is a sign that you are not using both eyes together as a team. If this is the case, you should consider seeing a sports vision specialist who provides visual therapy.

While maintaining your focus on the bead, try to locate the point at which the two strings come together. "This is where your eyes are really



**Brock string drill:** Phillips tests his depth perception skills with the aid of a simple brock string.

aligned," explains Jacobs. "If the two strings meet on the bead, then you have a match between where the target is and where you are looking. If they do not meet on the bead, then you may have a problem with your depth perception and properly judging distances."

If the strings cross over in front of the bead, Jacobs says your eyes are then converging too close. "This means that when you think you're looking at the bead, you're actually looking in front of the bead. You're processing objects closer in space than where they really are. This may lead to leaving many of your putts short. The greater the pressure you're under, the more likely it will occur."

Even judging the distance to the ground at your feet can be affected by convergence problems, says Rose. "If you're hitting wedge shots, for example, your eyes may actually cause you to hit shots thin or fat because of your depth perception. The ball looks like its closer or farther than it actually is."