**Athletes who think too much about missing a shot**

**may end up hurting, not helping, their game.**

In a study of novice golfers, researchers found that **frequently visualizing negative images** – overshooting or undershooting the target – before putting **had a negative effect on putting performance**, even when putters tried to counteract the images with positive thoughts.

**Positive imagery did not benefit performance** in comparison to a control group who received no imagery instructions prior to performance in our study.

The effects of imagery may differ when performed during practice, rather than during actual competition, when the stakes are higher. The effects of imagery may also be different in professionals than in amateurs.

Students in the suppression imagery group were also told to visualize a successful putt, but they were also instructed not to visualize either overshooting or undershooting the target.

The third type of imagery, suppression-replacement imagery, included the same instructions as suppression imagery, but students were also told that if they visualized undershooting or overshooting the target, they should immediately visualize putting the ball into the target zone.

For each type of imagery, there was a group instructed to visualize before each putt and another told to do so before every third putt.

The putting performance of students in the positive imagery groups improved, regardless of whether they visualized before every putt or before every third putt.

But frequently trying to suppress negative images did not do much for participants’ golf game.

The putting of those who visualized before every putt actually worsened, **even when they were told to visualize a positive replacement image**.

There is a common understanding among athletes that **thinking too much** about a particular flaw in one’s performance can backfire, making the performance even worse.

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**DR. MERCOLA’S COMMENT:** This newsletter primarily focuses on health, but occasionally it is worthwhile to take a slight tangent, as I am doing here. This study tends to discount the popular visualization techniques that are used to improve sports performance.

The EFT technique that I have been using recently is actually quite spectacular at improving these issues though and many professional teams use EFT or a variation of it.