

CHIPPING

Golf is the most humbling game I have ever played! Golfers spend countless hours perfecting their swing on the driving range so that when we walk on to the golf course our tee shots are down the middle of the fairway and our approach shots land on the green. If our putting is good you will walk off with a par or possibly a birdie. This is what all golfers dream of doing and work toward achieving.

The reality is that no matter what your handicap is, no matter how much you practice your technique, no one is perfect. As a result we all will miss shots. Your ability to recover from a poor shot will assist you in lowering your overall score and therefore help you feel satisfied at the end of your round.

Golfers tend to spend most of their practice time hitting balls on the driving range. It is important to work on your drives and approach shots but you can not forget to work on the “scoring” areas of the game. Golf is not a game of perfect, and even the best players in the game will miss some of their shots. As a result, improving your chip shot will assist you in getting the ball close to the hole and therefore, a chance to sink your putt for par.

Technically, the chip shot is the second easiest stroke. Next to the putting stroke, there are fewer moving body parts than any other shot in the game. Having said this, the chip shot is the most difficult for most golfers to master. The main reason for this is that most players tend to hit this shot using too much energy. By following these few basic swing tips, you will hit the ball more consistent and closer to the hole, resulting in a lower score at the end of your round.

A chip shot is a shot that is played in fairly close proximity to the green (generally no more than 10 feet away from the edge of the green). The idea of this shot is to hit it over the long grass, land the ball on the green as soon as possible and let it roll to the hole like a putt.

First of all, your feet will be close together (approximately 6 inches apart). Approximately 75% of your weight will be positioned on your front foot. The ball will be positioned opposing your back foot and your hands must be ahead of the ball directly opposing your front leg.

Starting in the correct setup position is extremely important. Everything we do is designed to give you the best opportunity to hit down on the ball. By doing so, the flight will be lower to the ground (just above the grass).

Once you are in a good set up position, you now need to make the stroke. The stroke is a shoulder and arm driven motion. You want to be sure to keep the lower body and head as still as possible. Having too much movement in your body will result in inconsistent contact with the ball.

One of the keys to hitting a good chip shot is to not use your wrists. Too many players will take the club back and as they swing into the ball, their arms will stop right in front of them and then they flip their wrists. This typically is the main cause of most poor shots. We want to avoid using the wrists.

Like in all other areas of the game, there is a finish position for the chip shot. Although different from the full swing, the finish position is where you swing through to where your hands and club is outside of your front leg. Ensuring you swing through to your finish position will assist in solid and consistent contact.

Distance is determined by how far the club goes back, not at the speed at which you swing into the ball. Too many players will take the club back too far in the back swing and then will decelerate into the ball causing them to flip their wrists. Be sure to shorten your backswing for a shorter shot and lengthen your backswing for a longer shot. Remember to swing through to your finish position approximately the same distance you swung the club back.

Finally, tempo is a critical part to hitting the chip shot consistent. Tempo is defined as the speed at which you take the club and then through the ball. You want to ensure that when you take the club back, it is slow and smooth and then accelerate into your finish position. Do not attempt to rush into the shot as the result will be poor.

There are many clubs that you can use to hit a chip shot with. If you use a more lofted club such as a pitching wedge, then the ball will not roll as far as if you use a 7 iron. If you are beside the green and the flag is close to you then use a more lofted club such as a pitching wedge. If the flag is at the back of the green then try using a 7 or 8 iron so that you get more roll. Do not be afraid to experiment using different clubs as the result will be different.

Practicing these simple swing fundamentals will assist you in getting the ball closer to the hole when you miss the green on your approach shot. This will result in lower scores at the end of your round.