

60 PRACTICE TEE

minutes to a sharper game

Head to the practice ground and experiment with a few different shots. Just one hour developing your skills from a variety of tough spots will improve your touch while adding options to your short-game armoury. Follow my tips and take the fear out of any on-course situation

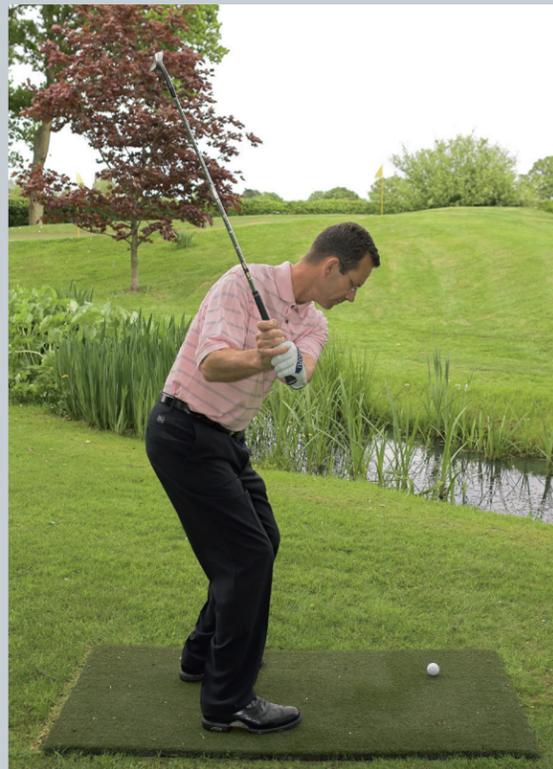


PAUL FOSTON
Paul has recently opened a teaching academy within his own private grounds in Smarden, Kent



1 Flop shot

→ The flop shot is a useful addition to your short game armoury. Find a difficult position to play from where you have to clear sand or water to get to the flag. At address open the clubface, open your stance and move the ball forwards – in line with the big toe of your left foot. Hinge your wrists immediately to initiate the takeaway, this will ensure the face remains open during the backswing. These basic mechanics will create the perfect, high-flying escape.



3 Sloping lie

→ Test your skill from a steep, sloping lie. To make a good contact you'll need an athletic stance and posture. With the majority of your weight on your lower leg, tilt your spine so that your shoulders are parallel to the slope while retaining a stable base. In this situation (left) it's important to ensure that you hit the ball before the grass so move your hands down the grip at address.



SHOTMAKER

2 Bunker play

→ Use the same technique when playing from the sand as when hitting a flop shot. Strike the sand before the ball and swing through to a full finish position. A long, shallow splash will ensure the ball emerges softly from the bunker.



Photography: Tom Miles

4 50-yard pitch

→ One of the most awkward shots in golf is the 50-yard pitch. To hit the perfect distance you'll need to commit to a slightly softer swing. First, decide if you want to hit the ball high so it lands softly or low so it runs up the green. To hit the ball high, open the clubface slightly and make a long, smooth swing back and through. For a lower flight make a shorter backswing, driving your chest towards the target through impact to a restricted finish position.



5 Chip and run

→ A chip and run is your safest and most reliable option around the green as it requires a fairly simple stroke. Using your normal putting grip, concentrate on playing the shot with dead hands. Eliminate all wrist hinge from the shot and ensure that your shoulders rock smoothly back and through. These basic mechanics will prevent you from flicking at the ball through impact and help you maintain a shallow swing path.

■ Shot at the Paul Foston Golf Academy in Kent. For more information telephone 01233 770067