



CHIP AND RUN

The chip and run is the safest but most underused short game option. Here's how to add it to your game

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1 The technique

The technique is very simple, I see it as an extension of the putt, but is well worth taking some time to groove. Start by setting the ball in the middle of your stance and as you will notice here, my stance is relatively narrow. Split your weight evenly, perhaps favouring slightly your left side. Importantly, be careful to set an athletic posture and let your arms hang naturally down, this will help your feel for the shot. As you take the club back, don't let your wrists hinge as they would for a normal chip. This will make sure you aren't adding any loft through impact and by simplifying the action, you are more likely to make consistently sweet strikes. The club should just brush the ground through the strike, collecting the ball as it goes.



2 Your options

One of the best things about the chip and run is that it involves just one technique. However, that same technique should be adopted for a range of different clubs with very different results. If this is a shot you haven't practised or are learning for the first time, take three clubs – your wedge, 8-iron and 5-iron. Use these three clubs to hit a series of chips to no

target in particular. Try to keep the chipping stroke and rhythm the same and make a mental note of the ratio between flight and roll for each. When you get to the course, this positive picture will prove invaluable in picking the right shot. I also use this technique for my hybrid chips. This is a great option for longer chip and runs but will require some practice before you take it to the course as the ball can come off quite fast off the face.



Photography Paul Severn



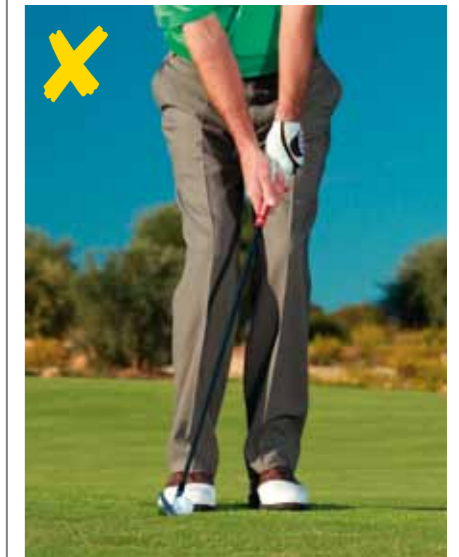
3 Effective practice

If you are practising this shot, it is always a good idea to place your towel on the green where you expect the ball to land. Obviously this position will change with your different clubs but it works perfectly to get you thinking about your landing zones. Having a clear picture in your mind for where you want the ball to pitch, will help you choose which club to go for out on the course. Importantly, if you can, pick a flat spot to land the ball. You want to take any possible vagaries relating to the bounce out of the equation.



4 Don't dig

One of the traps I often see amateurs fall into is placing the ball too far back in the stance and pushing too much weight onto their front foot at address. This promotes an angle of attack that is far too steep. Through impact the club is likely to dig and you'll end up duffing the shot. Keep the ball in the centre of your stance for a shallower angle of attack and you'll benefit from much more consistent strikes.



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Shot on location at the Oceanico Faldo Course, Amendoeira – Portugal

5 Find your rhythm

A great drill for the chip and run is to play them with just your left hand. However, you have to ensure that your left wrist doesn't flick the club at the ball – keep in mind the technique points we have already discussed. This drill is a great way to develop the pendulum rhythm that is at the heart of consistently good distance judgment. The more shots you hit, the better the strikes will become – this is a fantastic way to groove the best possible feel for this essential shot. You should notice how effective a smooth, flowing rhythm is for producing far more predictable results.