



CHIPPING FIXES

A deft short game needs good basic mechanics. If things are going wrong, use these drills to help

1 Hanging back at impact

One fault that many amateurs make is to hang back at they strike the ball. This often stems from a desire to help the ball into the air but can cause fat and thin shots. If your weight is on the back foot through impact your body rotation will stop and your hands will start to flick the club at the ball. The good news is this common fault has a simple fix. Hit some shots with your right heel lifted off the ground. This will fix your weight more towards your left side. As you play the shot concentrate on rotating your upper body through the ball so that your chest faces the target in the finish. This will help you find a more consistent strike and a much better flow to the stroke as a whole.



2 Lack of feel

To play short shots consistently well, you need to maximise your natural feel and for that you need a lot of softness in your body. However, as you search to maximise your control, especially under pressure, it is easy to let tension creep in. When chipping, I often see that tension causes a straightening of the elbows and knees through the shot. This will not only make good distance control hard to come by but makes poor strikes far more likely. So as you address the ball relax your knees, arms and shoulders. Allow your body to turn through the shot – as I do this you'll notice that my arms come in towards my rib cage. By having this softness, you'll maximise your feel for these delicate little chip shots.



Photography Paul Severn

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3 Lack of consistency

As with every other aspect of the game, the key to becoming a good chipper is consistency. That's why it makes sense to develop a technique that enables you to make the most of the bounce on your wedge. Old-fashioned short game coaching taught people to move the ball back and the

hands forward at address. However, this removes the bounce (the part of the wedge that keeps it moving through impact with the ball/ground). A great drill that forces you to use the bounce is to hit some one-handed chips. Set the ball in the middle of your stance at address and think of the club as an extension of the left arm. Keep them working together through the shot and you'll be using the bounce, for a more consistent contact.



4 Deceleration

It's a classic fault that we all know to avoid but that under pressure, all too often creeps in. The club must accelerate through impact – any loss of speed here and a duff chip is the most likely outcome. So, as you address the ball concentrate on ensuring that your follow through is longer than your backswing. It's a very simple thought and one that will pay off, especially when you're competing under pressure.

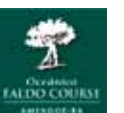


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Shot on location at the Oceanico Faldo Course, Amendoeira – Portugal