

**CHIPPING**  
**AND PITCHING**  
**WITH CONFIDENCE**

by

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## Introduction

Hopefully the tips in this e-book will help you get the right technique for the particular shots you are confronted with; give you swing-keys to keep your mind focused; and make you a better more confident wedge and short shot player.

The common theme with the chips, pitches, lobs and longer half-shots (50-100yards) and punch-shots is to:

- first, select the shot – including trajectory, roll, swing and release needed; and then
- address the ball and swing aggressively through the ball with the swing/release you have chosen.

Here is how to play some of the basic types of chips and small pitches we are all confronted with regularly.

# The problem with short shots

Here is why many club golfers struggle with short shots.

- They are more delicate and require short swings that bring the small muscles in one's wrists and hands into play.
- Fear of messing up the shot. Because the ball lies not far from the hole, there is pressure placed on oneself to hit the ball cleanly and close to the hole.
- They require different swings and types of shots; low shots, high shots, running shots and all types of different releases with the hands and wrists. It requires creativity.
- They require some basic set-up changes.
- Many lofted-shots require aggressive swings that only propel the ball a short distance. A lot of club golfers quit on these shots (not following through)

Remember, a shot has three positions after set-up.

- 1. Backswing**
- 2. Impact**
- 3. Finish position**

Many club golfers only reach the first and second positions thereby ruining their tempo and technique. Remember to complete the first two positions and, most importantly, position three!

And, of course, these are just positions. They must only be sign-posts along the full, flowing swing-road.

The next chapter gives you an important formula for short shots. This makes up 90 per cent of good short-game shots. The following chapters are more technical and are nowhere near as important as the next chapter. Let's go...

## Play with feel and imagination

Your thoughts should not be technical when you are on the course. This is the process to use.

1. Use your eyes to see where the landing spot will be, the roll, the trajectory, the speed of swing and the release that is needed.
2. You should now have a strong feeling for how you want to play the shot.
3. Go up to the ball and use that feel. Swing and release straight away. Don't waste any time. That natural feel is never wrong. Use it without delay.
4. You will fail if you get bogged down in thinking about your technique. The human brain and body best responds to targets **without delay**. Play like this and you will hit good shots all the time.

### **Vision (imagination) > Energy (feel) > Action (swing)**

Vision: Look and see what type of shot is needed. Look and see what type of swing you will make. Will the shot be low or high? Will it roll a lot, spin or go way up in the air?

Energy (feel): The vision is now translated into a real shot through your hands. Get creative.

Action: Go up to the ball with the energy and feel for the shot from the preparation and apply that energy from your body and hands through the club into the ball.

The rest of this e-book will provide you with some technical aspects of each shot but remember, 90 per cent of hitting good shots comes down to the points mentioned in this first chapter. Keep things simple.

**You must imagine the shot and play it aggressively without delay.**

# Basic lofted chip-shot

You should grip down for all chip-shots to gain more control and feel.

**Clubs used:** Usually a lower lofted club, like six-iron up to pitching-wedge.

**Situation:** Close to the green where you want the ball to run out like a putt. This shot is good for chips that you have plenty of green to cover. The ball does not stay in the air long. It is like a putting stroke.

**Set-up:** Narrow stance. Use your regular or putting grip – either is fine. The ball is in the middle of the stance with the hands slightly forwards.

**Execution:** You can, if you like, keep the heel of the club off the ground with the club resting more on the toe. This encourages less wrist-action. Length of swing: The hands only get just past back thigh.

**Release:** Minimal

**Tempo:** Brisk back-swing and through-swing should be similar distance – pendulum-like.

## **Pre-chip preparation**

Do your homework.

1. Take a look from the side of the chip at a position where you are equal distance from the hole and the ball. If it is down hill, take a quick look from the hole back to the ball (just on the way up to the green – quickly) so you can see the gravity of the slope and how hard you need to hit the ball.
2. Picture where you will land the ball and the route it will take to the hole.
3. Keep that feel in your head and practise the stroke with that feel.

**The Stroke:** Short and brisk (as mentioned on p8). Same length back and through.

**Swing Key:** Take the feel of the stroke and the picture of the chip and where it is going to land and execute back and through with a constant tempo without delay.

### **Chipping/pitching with a pitching, gap or sand-wedge**

This shot is just an extension of the low-chip; however the ball travels a little higher and rolls less than the low-chip.

This time we can allow the wrist to hinge naturally as the club travels back. The hands are placed slightly forwards (see photos on p11).

Do your homework as described in the basic low-chip and, again, keep the tempo constant. Look at what you have to do. Practise that speed of swing and then apply it. Land the ball on your spot just on the key and keep the length of backswing the same as length of follow through (see photos on page 11). I'm using a 52 degree wedge with about four yards of carry and about 12 yards of green.

Keep your body active – a little turn back and through.

**Struggling with chip shots for club golfers usually comes from a poor tentative tempo.**

To cure this, check that:

1. The ball is positioned in the centre of your stance.
2. A triangle is formed with your arms and hands on the club.

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3. The triangle moves back and the wrists hinge a little as the hands get past back leg.
4. **Keep your tempo constant.** Go back as far as you go through. Too many amateurs go back and then don't go through the same distance. Be like a clock – back, down to the ball and through. The follow-through mirrors the backswing.



Note this chip is one that has a little more wrist than the very close to green low-chip. See how the triangle with my arms remains constant. Back and through with a constant speed. Don't hit at the ball. Your aim is to go back and through with constant speed. Do that and the ball will go to the hole.

## Low chip from just off the green

For the low chip shot from just off the green you can use any club from a wedge down to a seven or six-iron.

### Technique

1. Set-up: I like to set up with my hands well down the club nearly on the shaft. Position the ball back – opposite the back foot.
2. I set the club more up on the toe so the shaft is more upright. This upright angle helps to limit any wrist movement.
3. Stroke. The stroke is like a putting stroke. Take the club just past your back foot then bring it back. The stroke is short with an even, brisk tempo.
4. Imagine where you will land the ball and what speed it is going to have to roll along at as it reaches the hole. Go ahead and hit it at that speed right away. If the ball was hit cleanly and it is not next to or in the hole, it means you did not program your brain with the correct speed and line. Do your homework!

# Short lob-shot

Key points for this shot before you attempt the shot.

- First the lie must be okay to play this shot.
- Play it with a sand-iron or lob-wedge.
- Open the clubface way open up then re-grip it like you would a sand-shot.
- Lower yourself (bend your legs).
- Do not go nuts with the swing. No need for a whole lot of wrist action. Play it in a similar way to the lofted chip mentioned previously.
- Let the already open clubface do the work of getting the ball into the air.

### Swing key

As with other chips, the key is to keep the swing going back as far as it goes through. Keep a constant pendulum-like action. Once the face is laid open you can afford have an aggressive action with the right hand sliding under ball and throwing the ball up and up and onto the green.

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I like to imagine my shaft going back on plane and coming down that same plane and then through. The backswing mirrors the follow through with a constant firm stroke.



Note: I'm on a slight upslope in this particular shot.

The club is laid way open. I then simply swing back with wrists hinging a little and come down and through with the right hand sliding underneath whilst keeping good speed through the ball.

Set up with the hands near the shaft and the body lowered.

Remember to see a nice high, soft landing lob before you play it. Also, imagine where and how your hands will finish, then go ahead and hit and finish in that position.

## The high lob from 15-40 yards

This shot is a no-go area for most club golfers. You can play it if you have a repeatable swing. You just need a couple of adjustments to your set-up and practise it a little. It is similar to the bunker shot.

**Warning:** If you're not confident playing this shot just play smart and hit out sideways until you practise it and have confidence in it.

What you need to do:

1. **A wide stance with the ball near the left instep (important).**
2. Club a little open. You do not need to open it too much unless you need a super-high shot.
3. **Alignment** – Open.
4. You need a fair lie.
5. Again, good constant **tempo**. Forget about consequences and concentrate on seeing a nice, high shot with a full release with the right hand and the open clubface finishing in a high follow-through position.
6. Keep nice and wide with your swing, not choppy (see photos p16).

## Chipping and Pitching with Confidence

7. **Not too much wrist-action.** You don't actually need much wrist or anything fancy. Just open yourself and the clubface up and keep a nice constant tempo back, down and right through. Swing normally.
8. Remember also to **envision** the ball and the path it is going to take. Imagine the ball going off nice and high into the air with the clouds in the background and dropping down onto the green finishing near the hole. Keep your mind in the swing and commit to the shot. (Make sure you see the video version of this shot – if you purchased access to the chip/pitch videos. Photos below.)



**Keep a nice constant tempo back, down and right through the shot.**

## The half-shot from 50-100 yards

This shot is played poorly by most club golfers and even some low single handicappers struggle with it.

The situation calls for a shot that is shorter than any full length shot you can play with any of your clubs. At worst we want to get onto the green safely and, if played well, we can turn it into a scoring shot – getting up and down and saving a shot.

The key, as with the chip-shots, is to have **speed through the ball**.

So how do we get speed through the ball but without the distance of a full shot? We can decrease the distance the ball travels by making two adjustments.

1. Grip down the club. Grip down a few inches, or even down to the shaft, if you want to take a substantial yardage off the shot.
2. Swing shorter.

You will also need to narrow the stance in a little (just a little) from a regular wedge-shot. Rule: The longer the shot the wider the stance.

### **Pre-shot**

1. Get set up by gripping down the grip.
2. As you get closer to the hole and the swing becomes shorter, open your stance a little. This helps you to release your hips and legs through the ball.
3. Practise swing back so left arm is parallel with ground then swing through.
4. The swing is a little quicker because the swing is short but the tempo, as for all shots, is constant and the follow-through mirrors the backswing.
5. **Be aggressive with this shot.** Rehearse the half-swing a couple of times. Envision the shot then go and do it aggressively – but aggressively with the right distance. Gripping right down helps.

If you want to take just 10 yards off a shot (100yards becomes 90), just grip down a little and swing normally. If you want to take more off (80 yards becomes 60), make the half-3/4 swing as well gripping down the club. Keep where you want to end your swing in your mind. Build up the feel for the shot then go and hit the ball. Practise it then go for it!



Half way back, halfway through.  
"Know the swing you are going to  
make before you make it"

Note: This same technique can be applied to punch-shots into the wind with mid-to-high-irons – fun shots to play when executed well. I play a punch-shot with an eight-iron in my swing video and play a half-pitch in my chipping and pitching video. Take a look if you can.

## Practice

### Chipping, small pitches and lob-shots

I like to practise with six balls and hit from different places around the chipping green. I will hit a series of lob-shots then pick up the balls and

repeat a few times. Then I will hit some shorter lobs and then maybe some low chip-shots.

Have fun. Hit from different positions and lies. Challenge yourself.

### **Pitch shots (50-100 yards)**

Hit at targets. Practise two or three distances. Get your 50-yard shot going, then go to 100 yards and then to 75. Use just a couple of balls for each distance. This is great for your feel, focus and swing-control.

Hit 15 or 20 balls and then go and pick them up. A short break and walk gives your mind and body a chance to recharge.

## Conclusion

The common theme that runs through all the different types of shots shown and explained in this book and on my videos is that we are trying to swing the club with robot-like tempo. Not fast, not slow.

The amount of backswing should mirror the follow through. Sometimes we use no wrist and a short swing (chip) and sometimes a full wrist cock with a slower swing (lob). But what remain constant are the tempo and

the matching of the backswing and downswing and follow-through – the three positions.

One last key is to make sure you know what shot you are going to play before you play it. When deciding what shot to play go with the one that you feel confident playing. Know the type of release that you will use, the speed and length of swing and then go up to the ball and apply that feel without delay.

Good golfing,

Anthony Procopis.

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To learn more about the other golf-improvement courses, go to:

[APGOLF.NET](http://APGOLF.NET)

### Other Courses

**Build a Better Shortgame** – videos, eBooks and email-lessons covering the essential fundamentals of consistently solid chipping, pitching and bunker play.

**The Automatic Golf System** – Minimize technical swing thoughts and improve your ball-striking and scoring now with the swing you already have. Great players play *feel-golf*. They “*look, see, feel, and swing.*”

**The Adults Golf Swing and The Simple Swing** – create a simpler, more repeatable golf swing.

**On-Course Scoring/Play Smart Golf** – countless on-course scoring tips that will help you maximize your scoring by navigating the every-round realities of playing from all sorts of lies, under various conditions, under pressure situations, and much more.

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Best Regards,

Anthony Procopis