

**Special Report**

***Mastering Golf's Short Game:***

***Discover The Easiest and Quickest Way To  
Lower Your Golf Scores!***

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"I just want to shoot lower golf scores!"

"I am tired of playing well but just not seeing the results show up on the scorecard!"

For most average weekend golfers, these thoughts constantly plague the psyche long after finishing a round. All too often, the round that "could have been" turns into the round that we would rather soon forget.

In an effort to not let that happen next time, most golfers begin to focus on the mechanics of their swing or make the attempt to add ten to twenty more yards to their drive. Unfortunately, what most weekend golfers fail to see is that it is their short game that actually has the greatest impact on the scores that they shoot.

For the typical par-72 course available today, most golfers will only hit their driver about 14 times through the course of a round. However, the short irons and putter are used at least 2-3 times that amount. Given the fact that the shorter irons are used much more often, doesn't it make sense that improving this area of your game will have the greatest impact in the shortest amount of time?

This report focuses on the short game, including the short pitch, bunker shot and, of course, the putting game. There is no doubt that improving your performance from under 100 yards will not only help

improve your score, but will provide added confidence that you can take to the tee as well. We are confident that the information provided within this report and, more importantly, the application of it will go a long way to helping you lower your scores and see the desired results on the scorecard.

## **Overview of the Short Game**

From 30 yards in to the cup is the decisive area of any golf hole. It is here that the score on the hole is often determined. It is here that the hole is finished off in good style or is ruined. Often, a bad start from the tee or a poor second shot can be mitigated by a brilliant approach and/or a fine putt. More often, however, the advantages of a good start and adequate play through the fairway disappear as a result of the approach or the putting, or both. The only time the short game is not important is when you hit a long shot to within inches of the pin, and how often does that happen?

The short game is the domain of the touring pros. They realize its value and work on it continually, paying special attention to their putting. The pros use the short game to obtain the birdies they need to win or stay in contention. They also use it to make up with a par for any bad shot made off the tee or through the fairway. The pros need the short game to turn their 72's into 66's and 67's because they'll hit from 12 to 17 greens in regulation in the course of a round.

A good short game can be even more valuable to the average golfer who typically scores between 95 and 105. The average golfer only hits

two or three greens in regulation, and the game could be saved with a short game that is reasonably reliable. The scores of the average golfer would drop very quickly if he or she could get the ball into the hole in three shots instead of four from a distance of 20 or 30 yards. If the weekend golfer frequently took two from the edge of the green instead of three, or got out of green-side traps in one instead of two or three, how much would the typical game improve? What if the average golfer holed the 2-foot and 3-foot putts that are so often missed?

A reliable short game can be developed through work and commitment. However, it calls for technique and work of a different kind. For the short game, the golfer must develop touch, rhythm, and judgment, instead of the comparatively big and violent body and arm actions used to gain club speed and power needed with the longer irons and woods.

While the short game can be particularly aggravating when it goes badly, it does have a couple of good points. You don't need much room to practice for it, and you don't need much strength to become good at it. Any high-handicap player can develop a short game as good as the pros with work and patience.

The short game can be divided into four categories for practice:

- 1.The short pitch from within 30 yards
- 2.The green-side bunker shot
- 3.The chip from the fringe
- 4.The putt.

For the average player, the primary goal of the approach and the trap shot is to get the ball on the green. For the better player, the object is to get the ball close enough to the cup to get it down with only one putt. However, for both types of golfers, the club to be used and the basic way of playing the shot are often the same. The only difference is that the better player has more control because of superior execution and confidence.

### **Preparing for the Short Pitch**

The average golfer should play the short pitch with a lofted club, an 8 or 9 iron for example. He or she should always aim for the opening of the green, assuming there is one, and in almost all cases, play the shot so that the ball lands on the putting surface, rather than rolling onto it. With the 8 or 9 iron, the shot should be a lofted pitch that will run a little distance after it hits the green. The loft of the club will give the ball some backspin, even if it is struck only well enough to get it into the air. The spin, coupled with the fact that the club is lofted and will descend at a rather sharp angle, will prevent the ball from running very far.

If the opening of the green is at the left, for example, and the pin is on the right behind a trap, the average golfer should still aim for the opening because that is the safe play. A better player, however, will go for the pin and the chance to get down in a single putt.

In many cases, the 8 or 9 iron should be used instead of the wedge because the average player is more likely to be comfortable with the 8 or 9 and the wedge is not the easiest club to handle in terms of loft control. However, this is an important shot that should be made with the club the golfer has the most confidence in and in which he or she has best advantage.

The shot should be aimed to hit the putting surface rather than the ground in front of the green because the ball's action on the putting surface is more dependable. The approach might be rough causing the ball to take a kick to the right or left. It could be also be soft or heavy, and the ball could stick without much roll. On the other hand, it could be harder than the green, causing the ball to run much further than expected. The only time it's a good idea to deliberately hit short is when the pin is set close to the front edge of a small green.

For the short pitch, the stance should be somewhat open and narrow with the heels only a few inches apart. The knees should be bent more than usual, with the buttocks in the beginning of a sitting-down position, as if a kitchen stool were moved in behind the player. The whole idea of this stance is that the golfer is taking a much shorter shot than usual and one that requires much more accuracy.

The grip changes slightly for this shot as well. The right hand remains the same as in other shots, but the left should be turned to the left a little bit more so that only one knuckle is visible rather than the customary two. The left thumb should be down the top of the shaft instead of a little across it. This serves to improve accuracy, since it acts as a brace against turning the hands too far to the left and pulling

the shot. If the shot is sliced a little, it won't matter, and besides, the ball will come down with more spin on it. On the other hand, if it's pulled, the ball will run and may get you far from the pin.

### **Chip Shot Problem = Distance**

The main problem with chip shots is distance, not direction. Most reasonably good golfers will chip the ball on a good line toward the cup. Golf instructors often attempt to reinforce that good accuracy by advising that the club be taken straight back from the ball, neither inside nor outside. If your chip shots consistently go to the right, it's probably because you're taking the club back inside; if they're going to the left, you're taking the club back outside.

But distance is the real problem!

There are two ways of gauging distance. One is by picking out a spot on the green where you want your golf ball to land and then hitting the ball so it will land there, rolling on to die at the cup. While this approach has its advantages, it requires an exact knowledge of how far the ball will roll when struck any of varying distances with any club from a wedge to a 4 or 5 iron. Because of this, you could spend a lifetime trying to acquire such knowledge, and you'd still make mistakes because of differences in the lie of the ball and the speed of the green.

A better and sounder method of tackling the distance problem is by instinct. While this seems too haphazard to be dignified by calling it a method, don't be too quick to condemn it.

Archery and golf are very different sports, but they have at least one helpful similarity, and this is the problem of overshooting or undershooting. In archery, it's called elevation: going too high or too low. Archers attack this in two ways.

Some use what is known as a "point of aim." They sight over the tip of the arrow to an object on the ground and then shoot, moving this object nearer the target or farther from it, until they have the exact distance, which will give them the right range by sighting it.

Archers' other method is to attack by instinct. They know by experience, judgment of distance, by feel – instinct – and they place the arrow accurately without using an artificial point of aim. Naturally, beginners don't have this instinct, but they can develop it until it becomes, with practice, very sharp. It is, in fact, the only way a field archer or a hunter, ever hits anything.

Golfers develop a similar sharpness of instinct. If you stood on the fringe of a green and, instead of chipping the ball, you picked it up in your hand and rolled it toward the cup, you would do pretty well most of the time. Your instinct would dictate how fast you should roll it to make it reach the cup. This is why golfers are told to swing through the ball while the wrists are still flexed - so the hands will go through first. It is the speed of the hands that determines how far the ball will go. It is much easier to control and regulate the speed of your hands than it is the speed of the club head. It's easier to think and feel how fast your hands are going than it is to think of how fast the head of the club is going.



So let your instinct govern the speed of your hands. Think only of swinging with your hands, not how fast you should make the club head go. Don't try to estimate how hard the club head should hit the ball. Just let your hands tell you how fast they should be going.

### **So What Club Is Best for the Chip Shot?**

With this in mind, what club is best for the chip? Some golfers say that the straight-faced irons, even up to the 3 and 4 irons, should be used. The argument is that the straighter the face, the less backspin it gives to the ball. Therefore, the distance of the roll is easier to judge.

They also say that with the lofted clubs, you never can tell exactly how much backspin you will get from one chip to the next, since everything depends on the lie of the ball and the consistency of the green. Golfers who favor the straight-faced irons generally visualize the chip as just a long putt. Of course, this is all perfectly logical.

Another group of golfers prefers the 8 and 9 irons, or even the wedge. They point out that, since these clubs are shorter with more upright lies, they bring the player (and his or her hands) nearer the ball. They note that most players are more familiar with these clubs and that their loft can be easily changed, within certain limits, by closing or opening the face.

And further yet, some players believe the club used should vary all the way from a 4 iron to a 9 iron, depending on how long the chip shot is,

while others would rather rely on only one club for all shots, regardless of the distance.

What all of this shows that there is a genuine difference of opinion about the matter.

In general, the 5, 6, and 7 irons are the best for chipping in the long run. They have enough loft to raise the ball without trouble, yet not enough to impart the backspin that would seriously affect the running action. Some tests that have shown that the greatest backspin is applied with a 5 iron, but this occurs when the ball is struck hard for a full shot. In contrast, the light impact for the chip imparts little spin.

Golf instructors recommend using the 5, 6, and 7 irons as dictated by the length of the shot being played and as the chipping clubs for the beginner or the more experienced player who is having trouble with this shot. The law of averages favors getting more chips closer to the hole with these clubs than with any others.

However, if a good player is extremely accurate using a 3 iron for all shots, or a wedge for the chip, there's no argument. A player who gets consistently good results knows which club is the right one to use and should continue to use it.

### **The Green-side Trap**

All bunker play is trouble. Bunker shots are unpleasant interludes that can occur anywhere on a golf hole. However, because those traps

near the green are in the scoring area, they fall into the category of the short game.

Traps vary widely, from deep to shallow, and some may have fine, fluffy sand, while others have coarse, heavy sand. The lies you can get in traps run all the way from clean to embedded.

In a clean lie, one that has a bank of no more than three or four feet to clear, the first task is to get the ball out of the trap and onto the green. Don't think about getting close to the cup yet. From anywhere on the green, you have at least a chance of holing the putt, but if you leave the ball in the trap with your shot, you have practically no chance.

For most players, the sand wedge is used for getting out of the sand. This club has made things much easier than in the early days of golf when a niblick, which was similar to the modern 9 iron, was the most popular tool for getting out of the trap.

Before 1930, the niblick was a comparatively thin-bladed club with a deep face. There was a tendency in hitting an explosion shot with the niblick, to dig too deep and leave the ball still in the sand.

Then came the sand wedge, which differed from the niblick in being heavier and, more importantly, in being very thick about the sole, which was flanged. The flange had, and still has, the effect of a plane, which tends to keep the club head from digging too deeply into the sand. It rides through it more or less horizontally. The wedge is not foolproof, however, as millions of golfers have found out, but it is a

better and more reliable tool than anything else produced and permitted by golfing authorities.

As you take your stance in preparation for using the wedge, shuffle your feet down into the sand until they have a firm base, so that during the swing, one foot won't sink farther down than at the beginning of the swing as the weight shifts. A drop can spoil the shot by lowering the arc of the swing, causing you to take too much sand. Foot shuffling also gives you an idea of the texture of the sand and how much of it there actually is in the area of the ball. Since the rules prevent you from touching the sand with your hand or the club, give your feet a chance to tell you.

The next thing to bear in mind about the wedge is that it is heavier than your other clubs and, therefore, is able to do more work by itself. In other words, it doesn't have to be swung so hard for a shot of average length. Of far more importance than any application of power is the necessity for accurate contact with the sand. Once the club starts moving, it will go through without any extra burst of speed or power if the hands are kept moving through the ball. Many average players want to give that extra burst of power because they fear the club will stick in the sand. Unfortunately, this often leads to the ball staying in the trap.

## **Putting: An Overview**

There is a wide difference of opinion about anything having to do with putting - from the grip through the stance, the stroke, and the type of

club itself. The debate exists because 50 percent of all the strokes taken in a theoretical par round of 72 in the game of golf are putts, usually two to a green.

However, 36 putts a round is not considered good putting by any means. This is because no one ever hits eighteen greens in regulation. They rely on chipping and short pitch shots to get close enough to get down in one putt on many holes. Hence, golfers who cannot consistently hole the short putts and who frequently take three on a green are in real trouble. They will find it nearly impossible to lower their score, even if their long game improves.

On the other hand, a good putter with an erratic long game can reduce his or her score appreciably by straightening out the drives and fairway shots, and by getting in enough practice and instruction. This golfer will also win a great many matches against players who are longer off the tee and more consistent through the fairway, because of the sheer emotional impact his or her good putting has on opponents. There is nothing more shattering to a player's psyche than to be on the green in two shots and take three putts, while an opponent is on in three and down in one!

Putting is such an involved part of golf that it is dangerous to make any generalizations about it. For instance, it is easy to say that distance, rather than direction, is the main problem in putting. This certainly is true on long putts. But what about the short putts? At 12 inches to six feet, there are few golfers who are going to be bothered by distance. The closer they are to the hole, the easier it is to control the distance.

Putting is also a very personalized part of the golf game, and players can easily become dogmatic about their method. To any such remark as "You can't do it that way," someone will produce a dozen very fine putters who do it exactly that way.

You can't say that any really good and consistent putter is using the wrong form. What works for an individual golfer is right. And in the philosophical sense, putting form is strictly pragmatic.

### **Putting: A Pattern of Movement**

One thing which you should do in putting is develop a definite pattern of movement, a sort of time-motion formula, in which the same motions are made each time, and the same amount of time is taken before the putt is struck.

That is what is meant by a pattern, a time-motion formula. Your pattern is not likely to be the same as anyone else's, but you should develop one and then stick to it. In the long run, you'll find it saves you strokes.

Another thing you should keep in mind about putting: Don't clutter your thinking with ideas about applying overspin, sidespin, or backspin to the ball. You can't do it. Alastair Cochran, an English physicist, recently demonstrated that any spin that happens to be applied disappears long before it reaches the hole. The idea that overspin can be put on a ball and make it dive into the cup is nonsense.

Your only goal in putting should be to meet the ball squarely with the club face facing exactly in the direction you want the ball to start moving.

The one indispensable element in putting is confidence. This doesn't mean being confident that you will sink every putt regardless of its distance. It means you should feel confident that you will be able to handle any putting situation that may arise, using the method that you have chosen.

In summary, if you want to lower your scores the easiest and fastest way possible, you **MUST** focus on improving your short game.

Despite the publicity and attention that the 300 yard drives get in the media today, most pros will tell you that the way to rise on the leader board is via the short game.

From Jack Nicholas to Phil Mickelson to Tiger Woods, the evidence is overwhelming that the short game is key. By focusing on improving your accuracy and distance control from 100 yards in, including your putting and chipping, you will see better shots, better scores and improved confidence.

This report has outlined the critical areas that need to be mastered in order to excel at the short game. Within the pages of this report, we have attempted to not only describe what needs to be done but, more importantly, provide some direction on exactly how you can implement what is presented here.

Golf great Bobby Jones said, "Golf is a game that is played on a five-inch course - the distance between your ears." By addressing the areas of your game outlined in this report, you'll be well on your way to a more enjoyable and successful playing experience.

To discover more about how to improve your total golf game, including eliminating golf's fatal flaws, mastering the full swing and managing the mental approach to the game, visit <http://theweekendgolfer.com>.

If your weekend golf game is frustrating, embarrassing and driving you crazy, check out the newly released audio CD set, *"The Weekend Golfer's Guide to Better Golf"*.

In this new CD set, containing over 4 hours of pure content, recently rediscovered training techniques are revealed that enable the weekend golfer to eliminate golf's fatal flaws, perfect the golf swing and manage the game with less time and effort than previously thought possible.

There's no time like today to invigorate *your* golf game!