

Today's
Golfer
MOST IMPROVED

ZONE YOUR



PART TWO **THE APPROACH ZONE**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH **american**golf



**PART
TWO-THE
APPROACH
ZONE**

**MAKE MORE BIRDIES BY
SEEKING OUT THE PIN!**

Today's
Golfer
MOST IMPROVED

ZONE YOUR GAME

WELCOME

There are fewer worse feelings in the game of golf than failing to capitalise on a perfect tee shot with a mediocre approach effort.

It's such a letdown to miss the green after ripping it down the middle. And what's more, when our iron play is misfiring, our short games are put under extreme pressure to save the round. This is a situation that many of us struggle to handle.

When driving goes awry (although if you read part one of Zone Your Game, this shouldn't apply to you!), deep rough or sand will usually be the terrain from which your next shot will be struck.

But the second part of Zone Your Game is specifically designed to cope with such troubling lies, as well as making the most of the good ones. It's all about finding the green with the approach shot - no matter where the ball ends up off the tee. If you've split the fairway with your tee shot, we show you how to hit the green in two on par 5s and how to rip your irons straight at the pin on par 4s. But should your ball slide off the short stuff, we enlighten you with techniques on how to master fairway bunker shots and deep rough.

On top of learning eight must-have approach shots, we fix two common approach shot errors - the overswing and the shank - that once fixed will improve your iron play immeasurably. Seek out the pin!

Joel Tadman,
Instruction Editor

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FAIRWAY WOODS

HIT PAR 5S IN TWO...

Hit solid fairway woods and make birdies a possibility

The limited loft on a fairway wood means your timing has to be extremely accurate; slightly out and it's easy to top the ball, leaving you a lengthy third shot. Finding the correct address position and swinging within your posture angles are the keys you need to master.

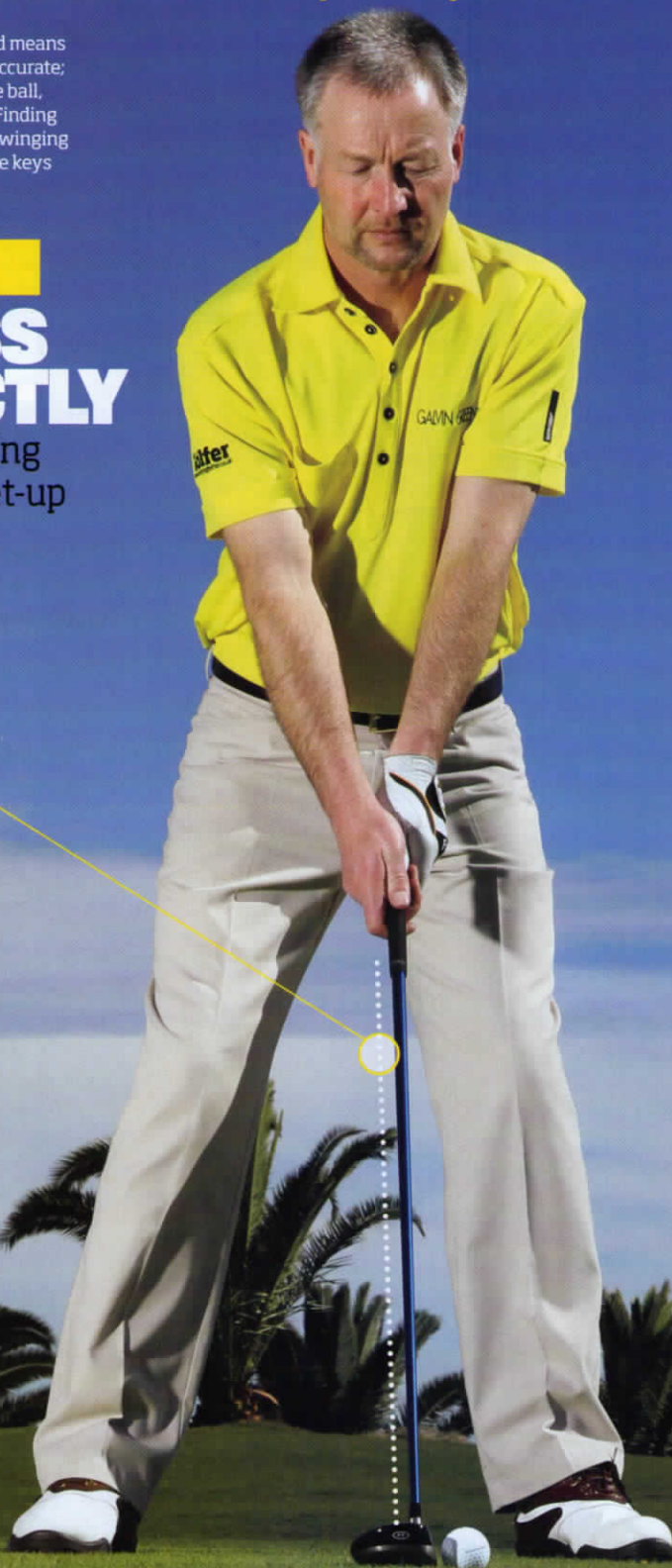
TOP TIPS

ADDRESS CORRECTLY

Promote a sweeping blow with your set-up

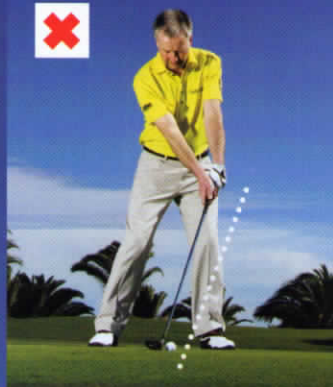
SHAFT

At address, set the shaft vertical. This ensures you create maximum loft for the shot and promotes a shallow attack.



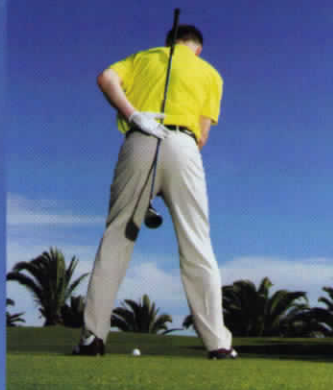
TOP TIPS

SET SHAFT CORRECTLY



Forward lean in the shaft - like for an iron - will destroy the natural loft.

SPINE TILT



A little spine tilt away from the target at address encourages the ideal sweeping impact for fairway woods.





IN SHAPE

Avoid the hips going under and the chest lifting up in the backswing (right) as this will cause a top shot. Try to keep a constant spine angle and a steady head for consistent strikes.

KEY DRILL

LEAF STRIKE

Practise striking the leaf and ball together



Place a leaf underneath your ball and make some swings, feeling that the clubhead grazes the turf just removing the leaf and getting to the bottom of the ball without a large divot.

THE CHALLENGE

HIGH TEE TASK

Clip three high tees to train a good sweeping blow

To see if your fairway wood play is improving, head to the range and tee up four high tees in a line; place a ball on the fourth. Then, remembering to keep a steady head and maintaining your posture, aim to sweep the three tees out of the turf.

Now hit the ball. Try to pick it cleanly off the peg. This will train the correct, level blow without chopping down too steeply. Go through the routine five times, clipping the pegs every time. As you improve your sweeping blows, lower the tees slightly each time until you are hitting balls off the deck.

HIGH TEE CHALLENGE





FAIRWAY BUNKERS

GO FOR THE GREEN!

...when you've got a good lie and low lip in front

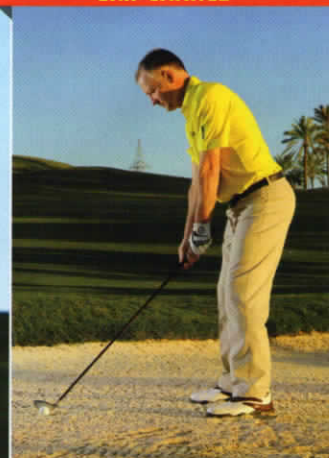
When your ball finds a fairway bunker off the tee, you've got two options: take a longer club and go for the green or take your medicine with a short iron and lay up.

Which shot you choose depends on the lie and the lip in front. First, we show you how to hit the shot when the green light is on and then how to master the lay-up.

COMMIT

Hitting a long iron or rescue club from the sand demands complete belief and a full, committed swing.

GRIP CHANGE



Choking down the grip slightly at address helps to create a more controlled golf swing.

LIP AND LIE

A good lie away from the lip allows you to be more courageous and pick a rescue club off the sand achieving a lower flight and more distance.

QUIET LEGS

Distance from the sand needs a precise strike; find it by keeping your lower body solid and quiet.

FOREARM TENSION



Tense the forearms a touch. This shortens the arc radius, keeping the clubhead just above the sand.

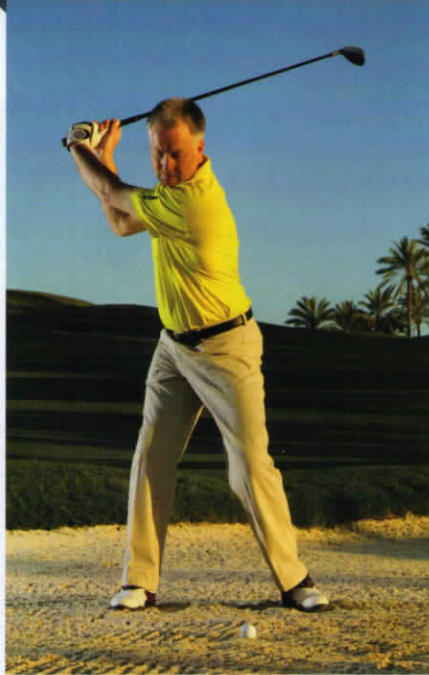


TOP TIPS

MASTER THESE SAND SWING KEYS

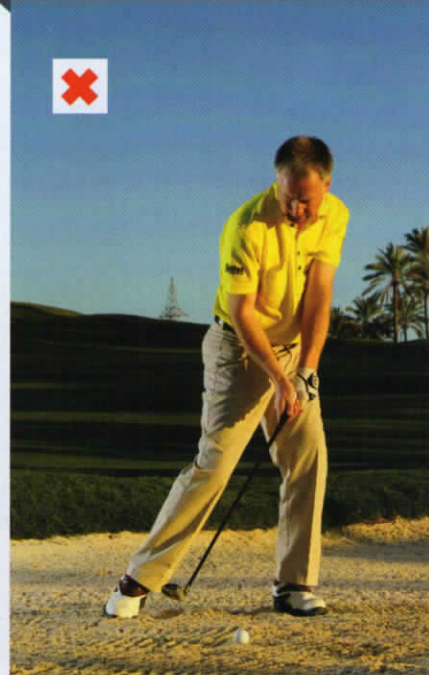
Shorten your backswing and sweep the ball off the sand with a longer club

BACKSWING



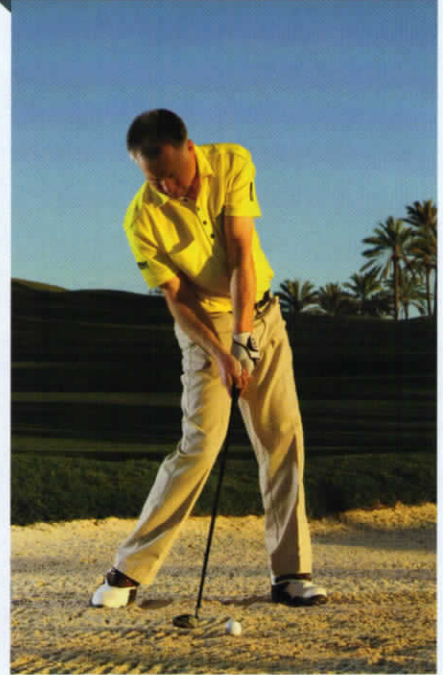
Aim to make a compact backswing taking great care to focus on a very steady head and ensuring the clubhead doesn't quite reach horizontal. This increases control and promotes good balance.

IMPACT FAULT



Longer shots need a sweeping blow picking the ball cleanly off the top of the sand. Get ahead of the ball with upper body and you will drive it into the lip or hit the ball heavy - disaster!

IMPACT FIX



Keep the ball position forward and aim to keep the chest behind the ball until impact. The club still needs to descend into the ball, but only slightly, taking a small amount of sand after the ball.

KEEP THE FEET ON TOP



For the long sand shot, don't bury the feet but settle them on top of the sand. This stops the clubhead digging into the sand too much and promotes a clean contact.

KEY DRILLS

TEE IN SAND

Encourage a sweeping blow with this tee drill

MORE YARDS FROM THE SAND



Practise hitting balls off a low tee peg in the bunker. Your aim is to nip the ball off the peg without touching the sand. This promotes a sweeping blow and a ball-first contact.



FAIRWAY BUNKERS

PLAY IT SAFE

Take your medicine when the risk - and lip - is too high

GET IT OUT!

With the ball sat down and a high lip in front, you need to proceed with caution. Just try to advance the ball down the fairway giving you a clear approach with your next shot.



TOP TIPS

TRAPPING TECHNIQUE

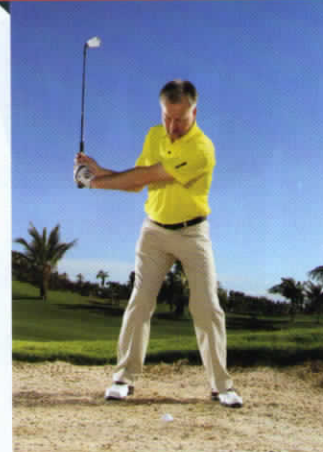
Set up to trap your ball between club and sand



SET-UP

The ball should be struck first, trapping it against the sand to launch it up high. Opt for a more lofted club such as an 8-iron, with the ball positioned centrally and your weight favouring your front foot.

SHARPER BACKSWING



An earlier wrist hinge promotes the necessary steeper angle of attack, contacting the ball first and the sand after. Try to create an 'L' shape with your left arm and club.

BURY THE FEET



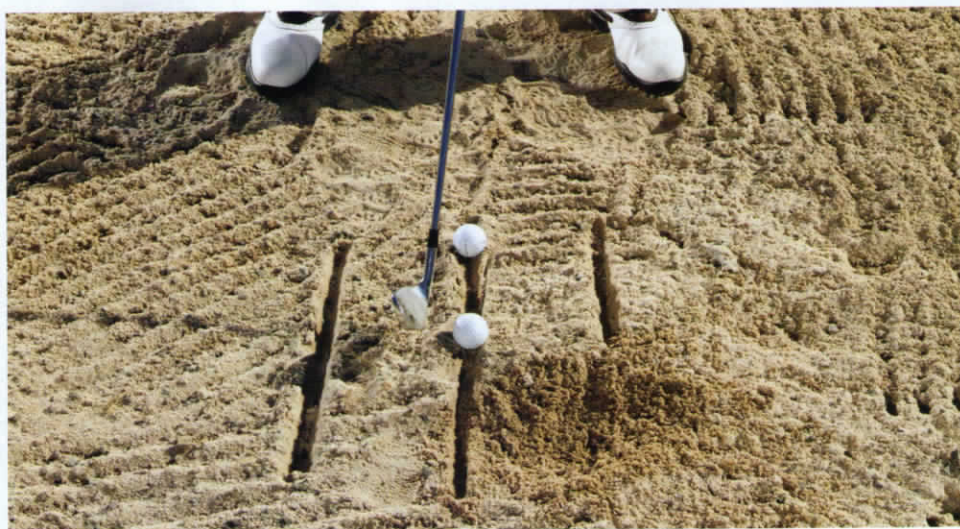
For the more lofted shot, we want to achieve a steeper angle of attack. To encourage this, remember to bury your feet in the sand at address. This will also boost your stability.

THE CHALLENGE

DIVOT CHECK

Make 10 perfect divots in the sand

Draw three lines in the sand approximately six inches apart. Hit 10 balls aiming to miss the first line and creating a sand divot between the second and third lines. This helps to enforce a ball-then-sand contact. Test yourself to see how many correct divots you can create out of 10.



OVERSWING

This trait can devastate your approach play. Stop it with these top tips

There is no ideal set length of backswing in golf, as long as it creates efficient coil and leverage. But one thing is certain - when you have an overswing affliction, you're guaranteed to lose power and control. If you're someone that suffers from this ailment, policing a couple of areas of your swing will rid you of this power-sapping fault and improve your accuracy too.



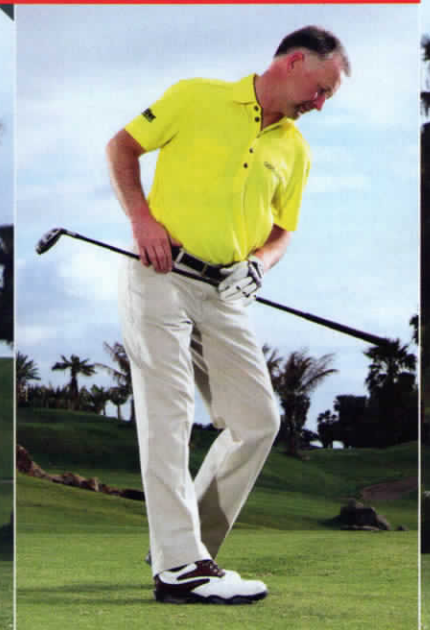
ARMS FOLD

When the arms don't support the weight of the club, the elbows fold causing the overswing.

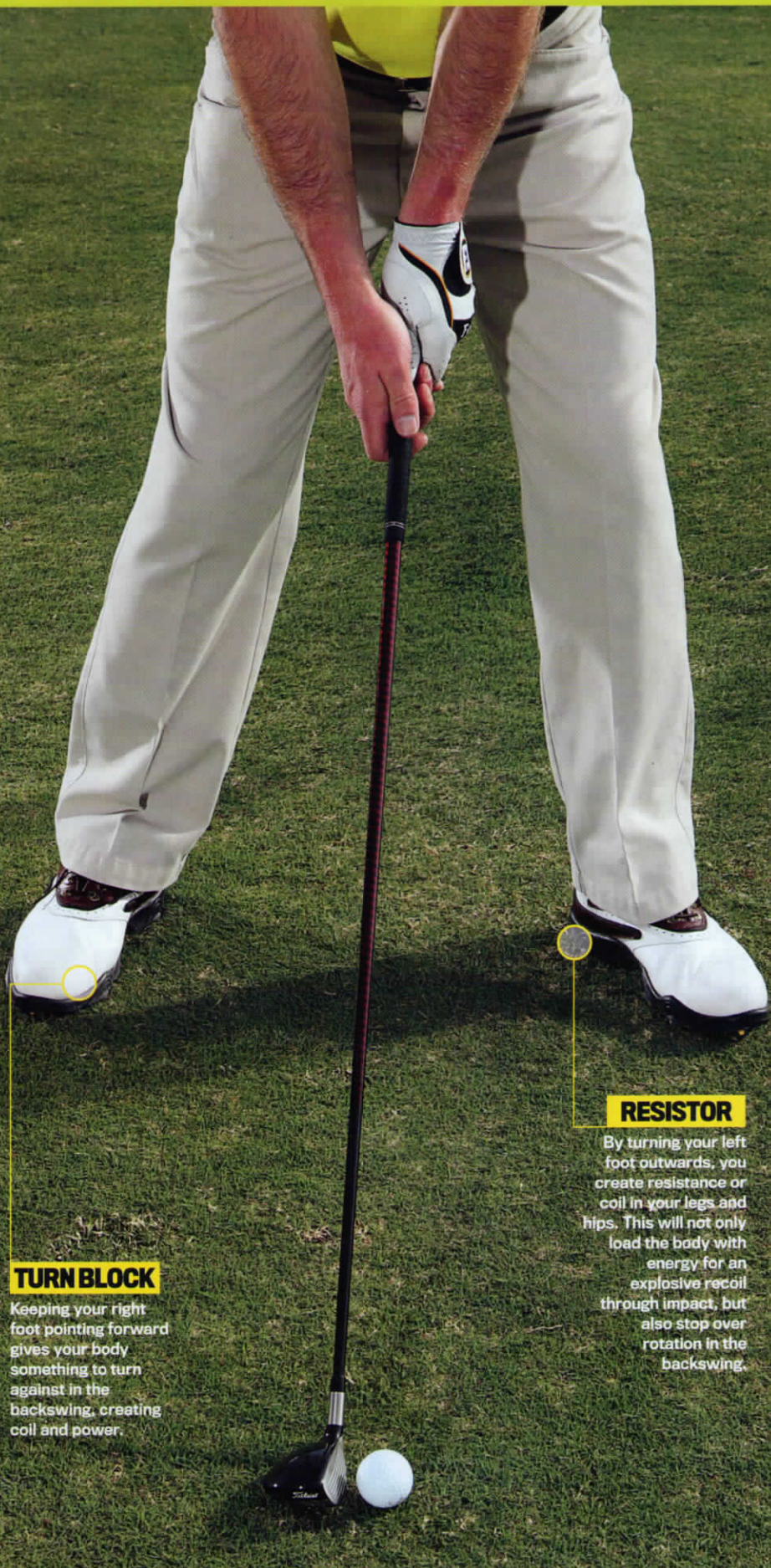
NO COIL

When the right leg straightens, this means that little or no coil is created, causing the hips to overturn and the upper body and club to travel too far back in the golf swing.

OVERSWING: THE CAUSE



Starting from the ground up, an overswing occurs from having too much left heel lift, overturning your hips and straightening your right leg.



TURN BLOCK

Keeping your right foot pointing forward gives your body something to turn against in the backswing, creating coil and power.

RESISTOR

By turning your left foot outwards, you create resistance or coil in your legs and hips. This will not only load the body with energy for an explosive recoil through impact, but also stop over rotation in the backswing.

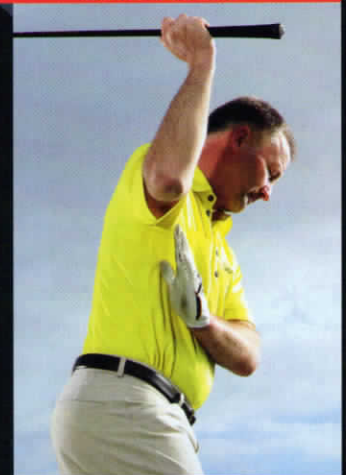
KEY DRILLS

STICK 'EM UP!



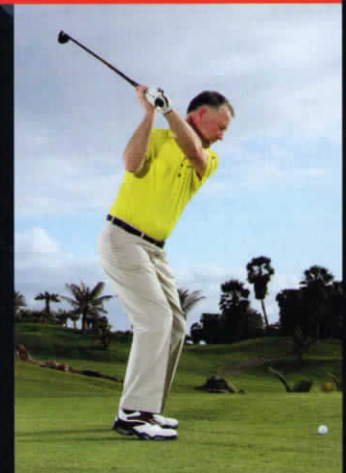
Your right arm should only fold to 90 degrees in the backswing. Imagine you were asked to put your hands up. This angle supports the left arm and club at the top of the swing.

SHIRT SEAM TIP



The seam in your shirt is a great reference point. Make sure your right elbow does not travel past it. Go past it and you'll be overswinging again.

HEEL UP DRILL



A great drill to feel a backswing with torque and coil is to lift the right heel off the floor and practise feeling the right leg maintain flex and 'bounce'.



SLOPING LIES

DOWNHILL LIES

Hanging downhill lies can be a recipe for topped and fat shots if you don't get your technique right. Choose the right club and swing with the slope - don't fight it!



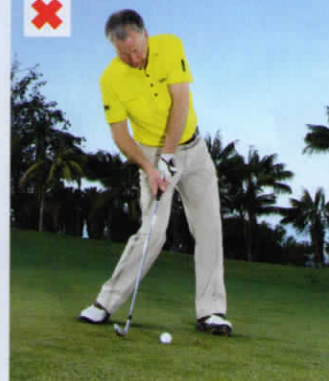
HIGHER FOOT

Confused where the ball should be? Position the ball near your higher foot to ensure a crisp, ball-first contact as this is where the bottom of the arc will occur.



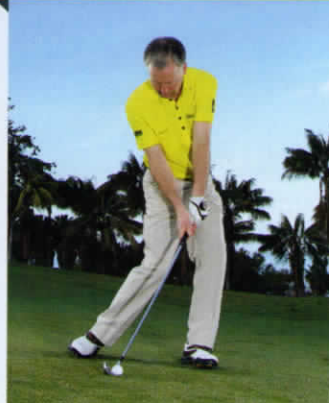
TOP TIPS

IMPACT FAULT



Trying to lean back and 'help' the ball in the air will result in fat shots, striking the turf before the ball.

TRACK THE SLOPE



Aim to make the clubhead descend to impact, tracing the contours of the slope. Trust the loft of the club to lift the ball up. Maintain knee flex through the hitting area, making sure the bottom of the arc is prolonged slightly.



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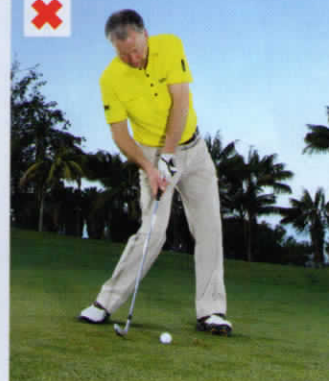
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RIGHT ANGLES

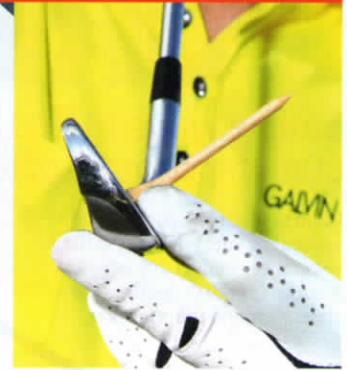
Set your shoulders level to the slope



ANGLES

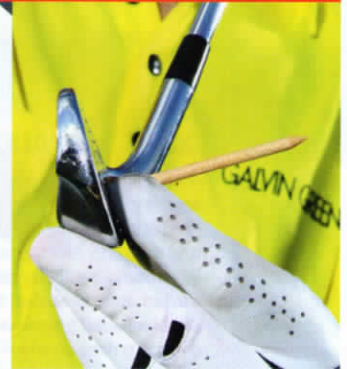
Aim to set the shoulders level with the slope and the body as near as possible at right angles to the ground.

LEVEL LIE: TRUE LOFT



From a flat lie, the club presents its usual loft, as shown by the tee peg.

DOWNSLOPE: LOFT REDUCED



As the shaft is leant forward when forming the correct stance from a downhill lie, it de-lofts the club; make sure you choose a more lofted club depending on the slope severity.

KEY DRILLS

WALK ON BY

The 'walk after drill' will help nail this shot



To avoid leaning back and scooping the ball up, try to 'walk through' to the finish, letting your weight move down and forward, pinching the ball up from off the turf crisply.

THE CHALLENGE TEE CLIPPER

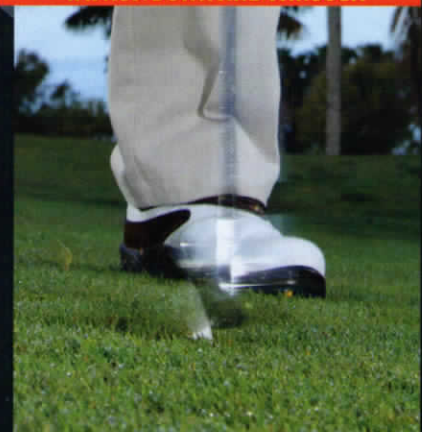
A simple tee peg can boost downslope striking

SET-UP: PEG IN FRONT OF BALL



Great downslope striking means making a descending strike that squeezes the ball forwards and up. Develop this angle of attack by sticking a peg into the ground on the ball-target line, a clubhead's width from the ball.

IMPACT: DOWN AND THROUGH



Ensure only a cm or so of the tee is showing. Now hit the ball. As you swing down, your intention is purely to knock the tee out of the ground. This ensures that downward angle of attack into the ball, and a more solid strike.