



MID-IRON ACCURACY

PURE STRIKE

Simple ways to find the sweetspot more often

To hit well-struck, accurate iron approach shots you must satisfy several key impact ingredients. Read on to banish heel and toe shots, fats and thins forever.



STAR TURN

Aim for a compact backswing with your chest 'loaded' over the right instep. This means you are starting the downswing with your weight in the right place.



Understanding differences between set-up and impact is vital. At address, shirt buttons are over the ball.



The backswing loads weight onto the right side; extended left arm retains a constant radius from the chest.



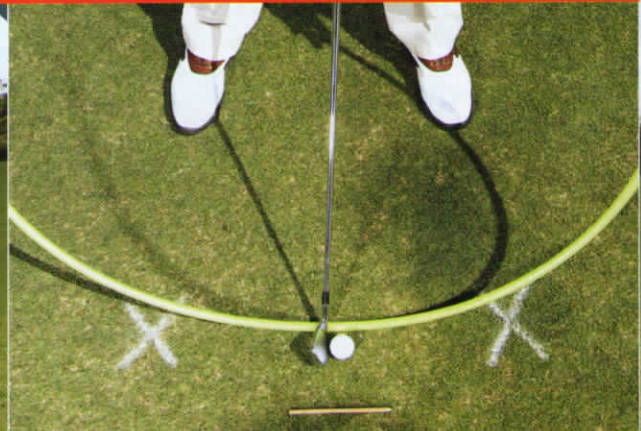
Although the head is centred, notice how the hips, hands and clubshaft have shifted forwards, compressing the ball. This moves the low point of the arc forward from address, promoting a powerful ball then turf contact which is ideal for irons.



SQUARE ATTACK

The perfect swing path sees the clubhead attack the ball from inside the ball-target line. The club hits that target line momentarily just before impact, before swinging back inside it. Problems with a square attack crop up when the club hits the ball-target line well before or well after impact, as marked below by the two Xs.

CLUB SWINGS FROM IN TO IN



The ideal delivery produces an arc where the clubhead skirts just inside both x's, travelling briefly along the target line before returning on that inside arc.



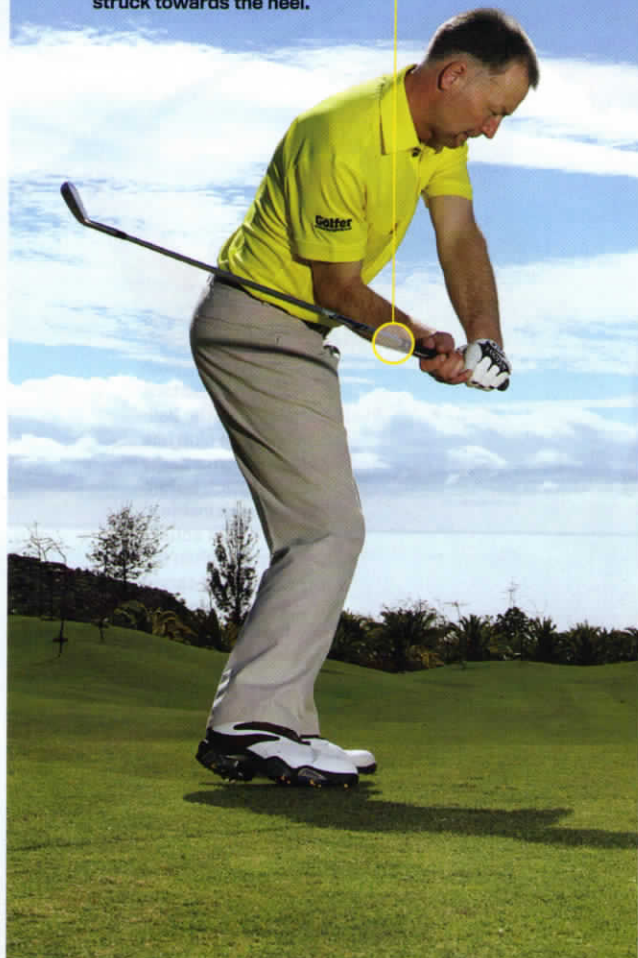
MID-IRON ACCURACY

TOO MUCH FROM THE INSIDE



FLAT LINING

If you drop the shaft too flat in the downswing your approach will be too much from inside the correct path. You can hit thin shots struck towards the heel.



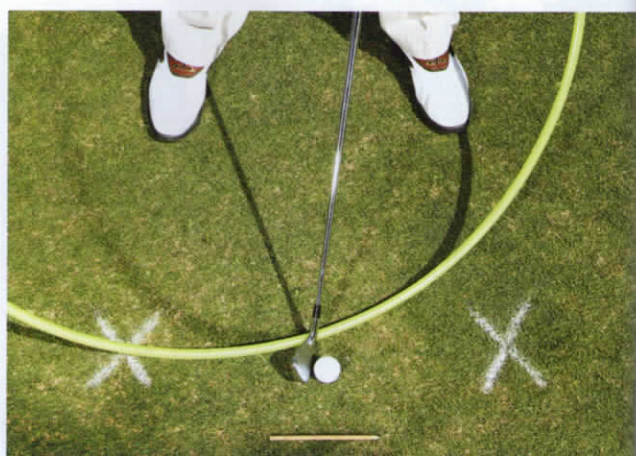
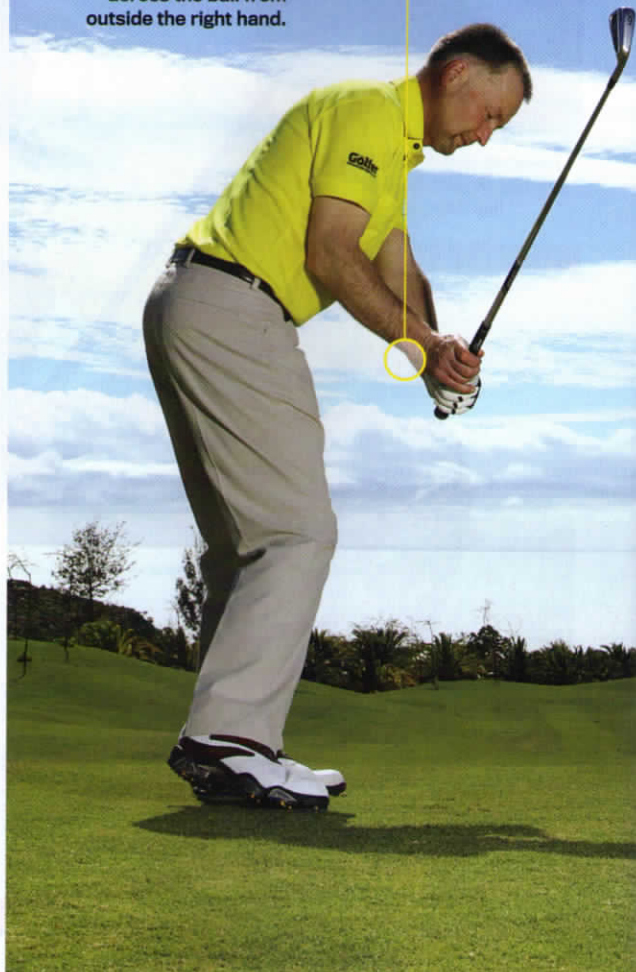
Here's how the inside attack looks through the ball. The club's path, indicated by the tube, is shallow and too far from the back X and runs over the front one. You can expect hooks left and pushes to the right.

ATTACKING FROM THE OUTSIDE



TOO STEEP

Delivering the shaft too steep will cause choppy, heavy shots struck from the toe as the arc cuts across the ball from outside the right hand.



When the attack path is too much from the outside, the club hits the ball-target line early with a steeper path before cutting away too sharply through to the inside of the front X. Pulls and slices await.

KEY DRILLS

The difference in the loft and length of short, medium and long irons means each club has to strike down on the ball differently, subtly descending more on the ball as the loft increases on the club. Place three balls as shown and three behind, missing the balls behind. This promotes a sweeping descent with the longer irons and a steeper, squeezing strike as the loft increases.

CLEAN SWEEP

The closer the rear ball to the object ball, the more downward the strike needs to be.

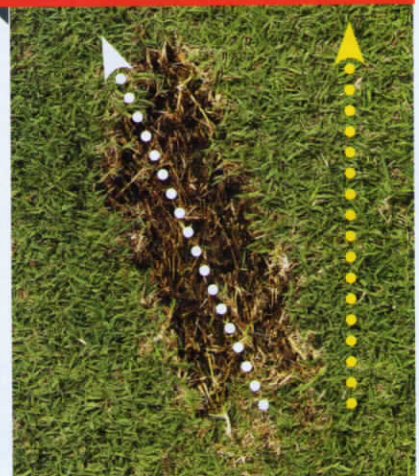
FIND THE SWEETSPOT



By understanding how the path of your club affects the strike, you can find the sweetspot on your irons far more regularly. Do this repetitively with a centred strike on a squaring clubface and knock the pin out every time.

THE CHALLENGE

DIVOT CHECK



Hit 10 balls and after each, check your divots point down the target line (yellow line). It's a simple but effective way of finding out if you are cutting across the ball from the outside, causing a pull or a slice (white line).



SIDEHILL LIES

AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Sideslope stances add sidespin to your shots. This guide will show you which way the ball will go, and give you the tools to stay on top of the situation

BALL BELOW

The arc angle or plane of the swing becomes more upright, influenced by the extra lean forward at address.

This creates a slightly steeper impact and sliding fade to the ball flight so allow for it and aim a touch left.

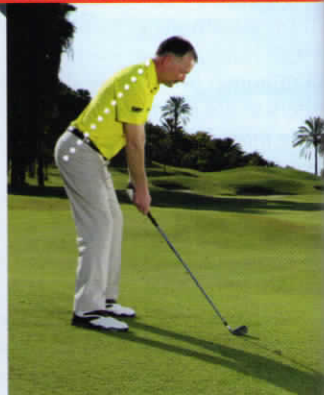
MAXIMISE THE CLUB'S LENGTH



Feel the butt of the club's grip against the heel of your top hand to make the club as long as possible.

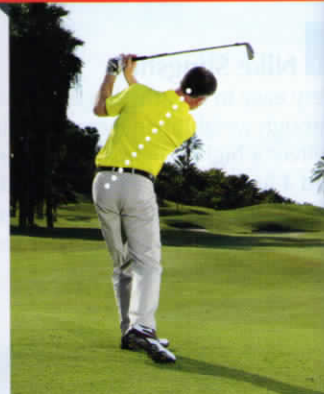
TOP TIPS

EXTRA BEND FROM THE HIPS



When you lean forward to ground the club at address this tilts the spine forward at a steeper angle than normal and also affects the lie angle of the club.

RETAIN YOUR SPINE ANGLE



Naturally from this lie, your biggest problem is straightening up through the shot and thinning the ball. Make a conscious effort to retain that steeper spine angle right through to the end.

THE CHALLENGE

BALANCED

Simulate this tricky lie with a piece of foam



Some DIY insulation foam or a swimming noodle can boost your ability to execute these shots. The tube simulates how your balance will be compromised and teach you to stay down and in balance. Strike well from here and you'll master this shot.

BALL ABOVE

With the ball higher than your feet your spine becomes more upright. Shoulders rotate on a flatter plane, creating a shallow swing shape.

TOP TIPS

ALLOW FOR RIGHT-TO-LEFT



The ball-above-feet stance forces you to swing more around your body, a flatter swing which promotes a draw. Make sure you are aiming right of target (right-handers) to allow for it.

'SHORTEN' THE CLUB



Minimise the effects of the slope by leaving an inch or two above the top of your top hand as you take up your grip. Shortening the club like this can make the club less powerful, so club up.

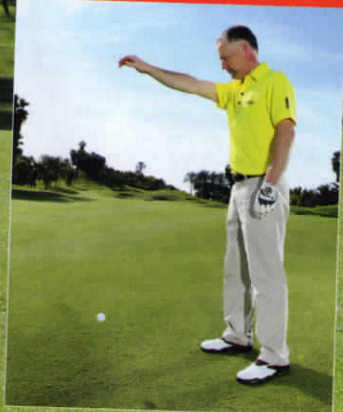
KEY DRILLS

USE THE TEE'S EDGE



It is essential you build a solid stance where you can swing in balance. Find the edge of a tee and make practice swings. Ensure the club 'bottoms out', clipping the grass each time.

CHECK THE BOUNCE



To work out the ball flight visualize dropping a ball. The way it bounces and rolls predicts the way it'll curve.

MORE DISTANCE FROM ROUGH

How a lofted iron can get you closer to the green from the long grass

Grabbing the rescue just because it says 'rescue' on it doesn't mean it will rescue you from every poor lie. Sometimes a well executed 8-iron can give you more yards than you think... and a chance to save par. Adopting some subtle changes can allow you to draw the ball, sneaking a few extra yards when it scampers along the fairway.



LOFTY AMBITION



More loft on the club (8-iron) will allow the clubhead to slice under the ball in a buried lie.

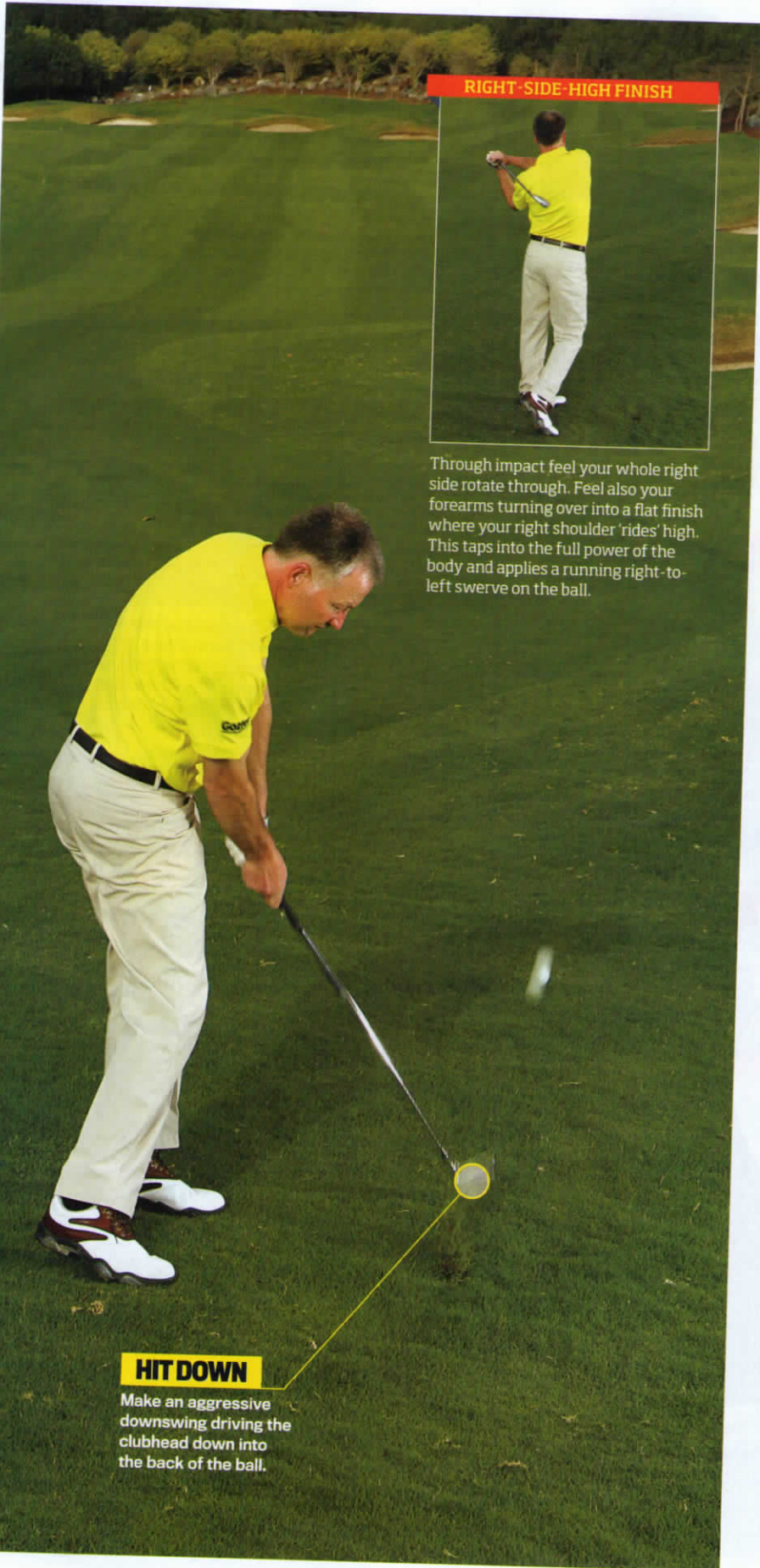
AIM RIGHT

Point your shoulders right of the target to set up a shot that starts right before drawing back to the left, and the target. The shape is created by swinging along your toe line, the clubface pointing at the target.

GRIP PROMOTES A DRAW



Adopt a 'strong' grip where you see at least three knuckles of the top hand and hold with all 10 fingers on the handle. This will secure the blow and encourage the face to rotate through impact providing extra roll on landing.



RIGHT-SIDE-HIGH FINISH



Through impact feel your whole right side rotate through. Feel also your forearms turning over into a flat finish where your right shoulder 'rides' high. This taps into the full power of the body and applies a running right-to-left swerve on the ball.

HIT DOWN

Make an aggressive downswing driving the clubhead down into the back of the ball.

KEY DRILLS

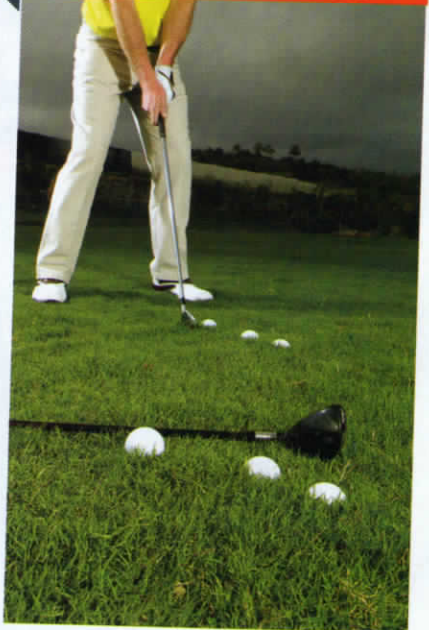
METAL THRASH



To learn the aggressive downward blow, grab your 8-iron and head into the deep rough at the edge of the course. With your new grip aim to knock out big divots, recreating that ideal impact feeling.

THE CHALLENGE

8-IRON VERSUS UTILITY



Prove to yourself an 8-iron may be more efficient than a rescue. Hit three balls with each from a buried lie using the tips here. The 8-iron will run out just as far and you are more likely to escape the rough.

SHANKING

Remove this frustrating shot by understanding its swing path roots

THE CAUSE

The shank rears its ugly head when the socket of the club makes contact with the ball. It's often caused by the right shoulder and chest working forwards, throwing the weight to the toes and the club's heel away from the body.



THE HEEL STRIKE



The socket is the small crook where the shaft meets the clubface. Its extreme angle can cause extreme shot patterns. But don't be too despondent - the socket is only an inch or so from the sweetspot!

GO ONLINE NOW!

See new video tips at www.todaysgolfer.co.uk/approachzone

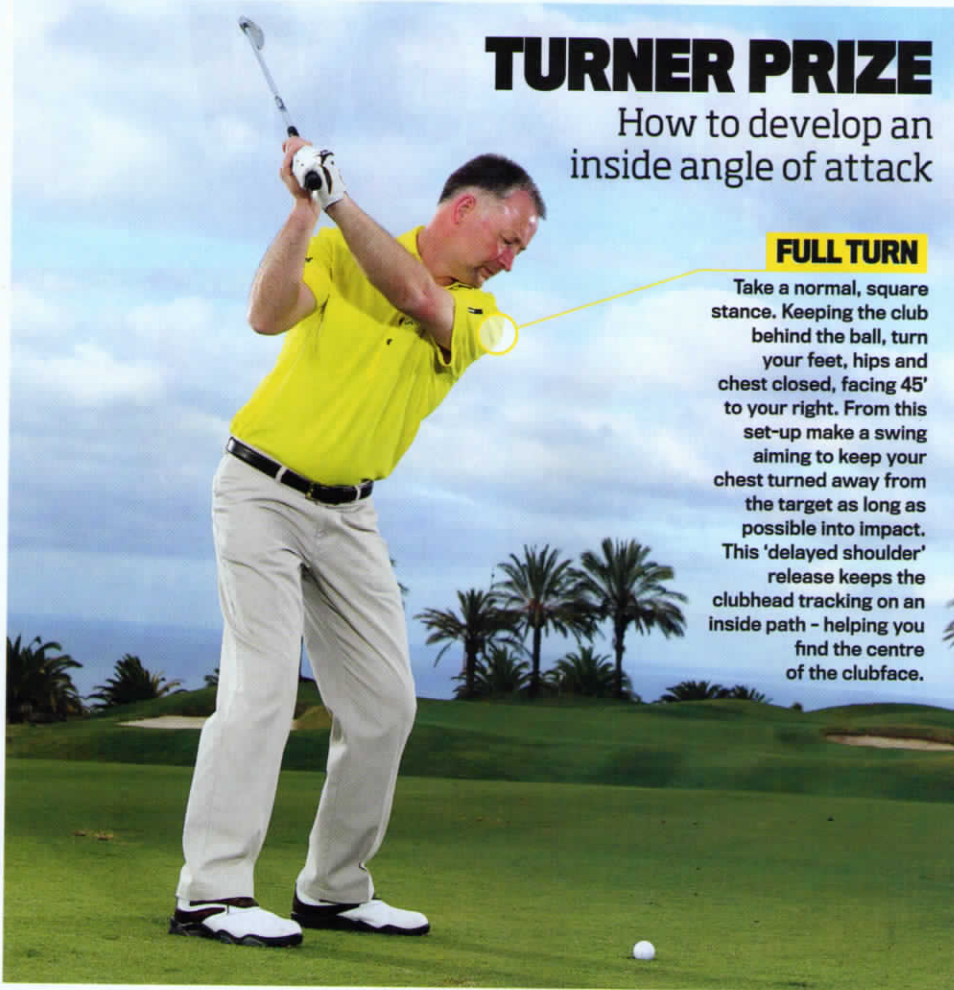
CHECK OUT EXTRA FABRICATION TIPS ONLINE! CHECK OUT FREE VIDEO TIPS ONLINE!

YIKES!

The socket of the club shoots the ball off to the right. Be sure not to confuse it with one off the toe - check the clubface for tell-tale marks

TURNER PRIZE

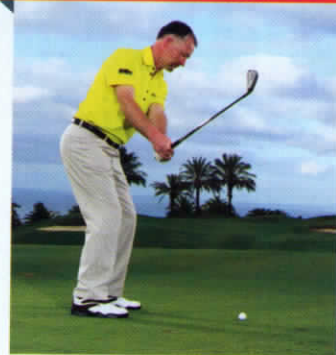
How to develop an inside angle of attack



FULL TURN

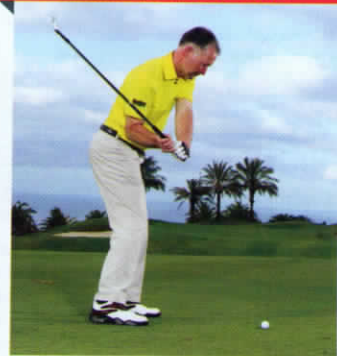
Take a normal, square stance. Keeping the club behind the ball, turn your feet, hips and chest closed, facing 45° to your right. From this set-up make a swing aiming to keep your chest turned away from the target as long as possible into impact. This 'delayed shoulder' release keeps the clubhead tracking on an inside path - helping you find the centre of the clubface.

OUTSIDE TAKEAWAY...



When the flow of the swing comes inside then out and over you are in trouble! Aim to reverse this by taking the club 'out' in the takeaway.

... MEANS INSIDE ATTACK



From a more outside backswing you now have the room to drop the club back inside on the way down, pulling through impact for a centred strike.

KEY DRILLS

GAIN FACE

Chalk lines on the face can train a toe strike



Mark the face's toe and the centre with chalk. Train in the ideal strike by addressing the ball in the centre, swinging back then striking ball in the toe. Check the chalk line for impact marks.

TOP TIPS

INSIDE STORY

How a sponge can cure the over-the-top shank move

SPONGE JUST OFF THE TOE

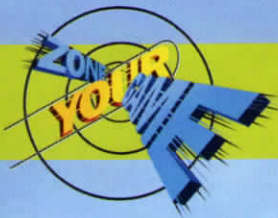


Position a sponge just outside the toe of the club, as shown. Hit the ball as normal. Any attack from outside the line will see the toe catch the sponge.

INSIDE ATTACK



The simple instinct to miss the sponge will help you develop an attack on the ball which comes more from the inside - pulling the heel further away from the ball.



INTO THE WIND

PUNCH IT LOW

Control spin and clubface loft and you can cheat the breeze...

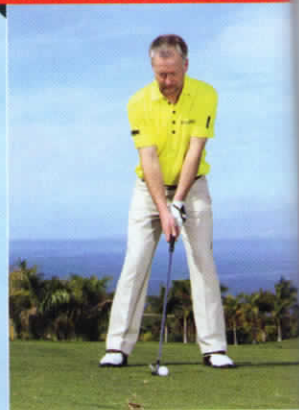
To hit those piercing low shots under the wind you will need to be able to do two key things. First, take a little backspin off the ball; and second, deloft the clubface through impact. Here's how to do both.

HANDS LEAD

Feel the left wrist is bowed outwards at impact. It takes loft off the face, drilling the ball out low.



SET UP FOR THE KNOCKDOWN



The key thing to note here is that the grip end of the club points to the left shoulder. This puts a forward lean in the shaft, which allows the hands to lead the head into impact, keeping loft off the face. Achieve this position by playing the ball centrally in your stance, or fractionally behind, and creating a left arm/clubshaft line.

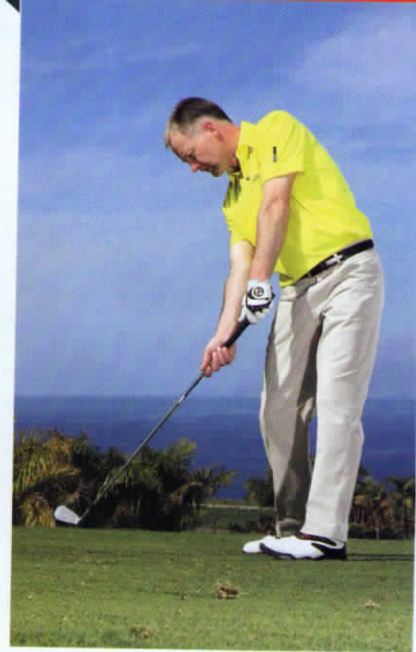


DRAG BACK

From an orthodox set-up aim for a three-quarter swing where you can create some 'lag' or delay in the release of the club late into impact. Lag can be encouraged by almost feeling you 'drag' the handle away from the ball first; it then becomes easier to leave the club trailing behind the wrists as you change direction down.

KEY DRILLS

SPLIT-HAND ROUTINE



To avoid a scoopy impact which causes high shots by adding loft, try this ice hockey drill. Split your hands and visualise presenting the whole shaft to the ball - not just the head. It promotes taking loft off the face.



FLEX APPEAL

The soft wrists, primed by that backswing lag, leave the clubhead trailing on the way down - putting the hands well ahead and setting up the de-lofting of the clubface.

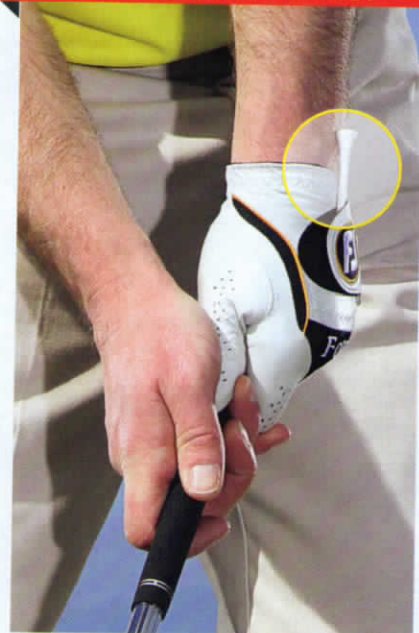
ADD KNEE SLIDE



Although rare in modern swings, a sliding left knee action seen here helps prolong the bottom of the arc, shallowing it out and reducing spin on the ball.

THE CHALLENGE

WRIST BREAKDOWN TEST



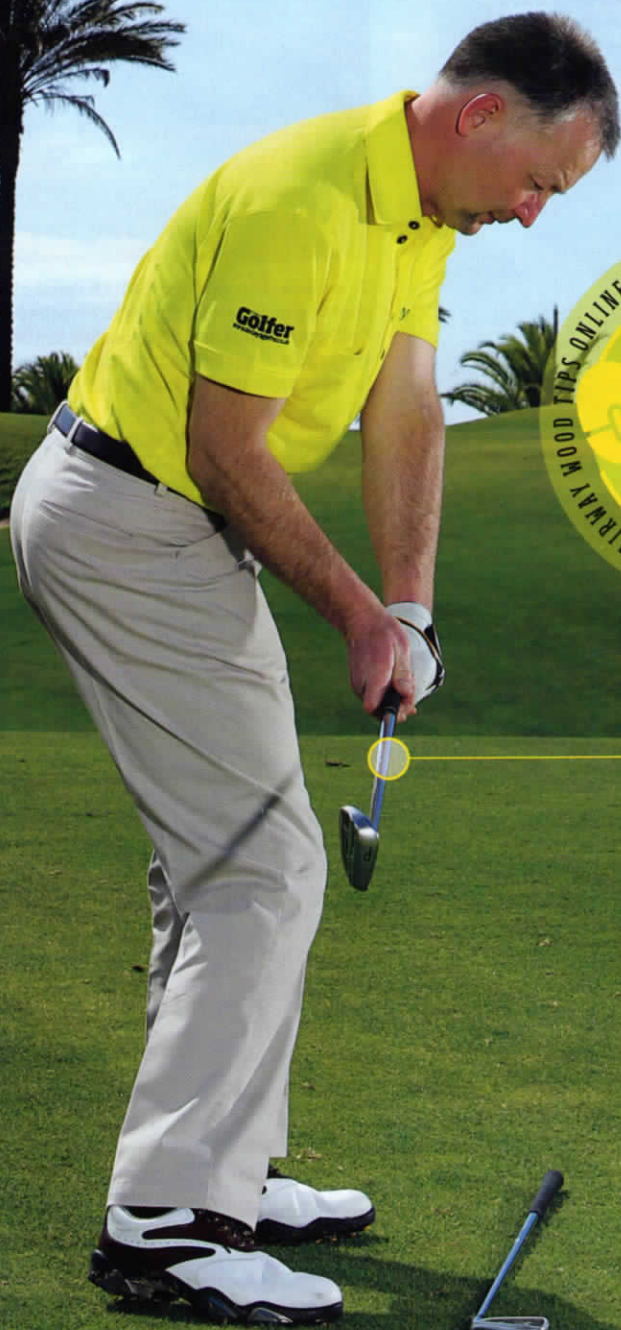
Place a long tee in the Velcro of your glove. Hit 10 balls trying to keep the tee in position with a bowed left wrist through impact. Any scooping or breaking down of the left wrist will dis-lodge it.



PITCHING

CONTROL PITCH SHOTS SPIN AND DISTANCE

How many times are you left with a simple pitch after a good drive only to leave it weak and short of the pin? Get back to square to send the ball pin high more often

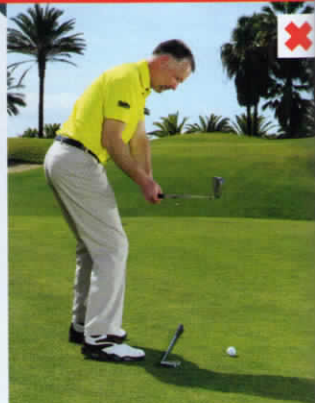


SQUARE DEAL

Work on setting up squarer. See your pitching as a mini version of the full swing; this will promote the ideal in-to-square, to-in swing path loaded with backspin and no side spin.

TOP TIPS

GETTING OPEN: STEER CLEAR



Letting your stance creep 'over' or too open can create a chain reaction making you swing outside the ball and across the ideal swingpath.

ACROSS = WEAKER BLOW

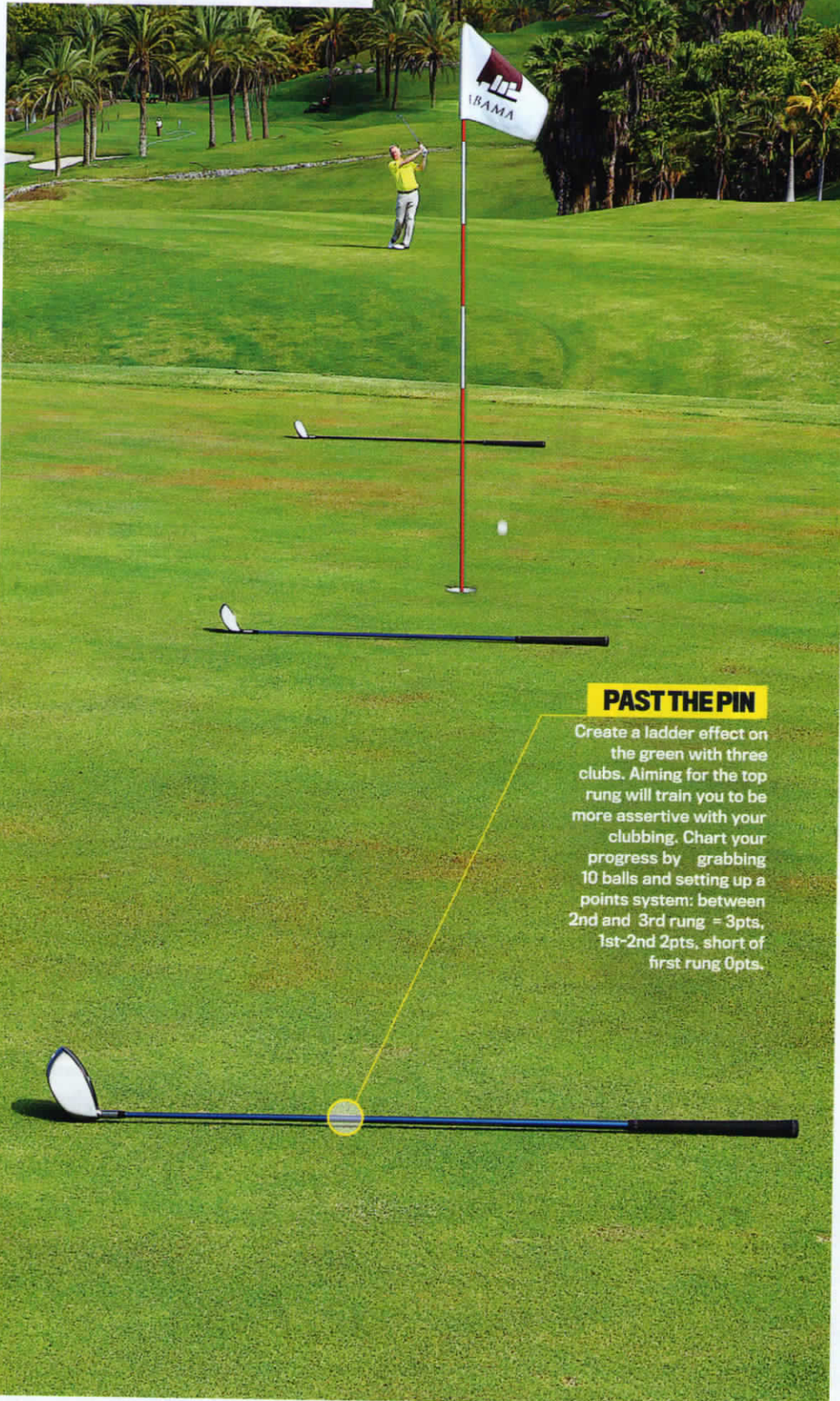


Hitting across the ball applies a glancing blow, a weak strike that will often leave the ball short and right.

KEY DRILLS

PIN BOMBS

How to add aggression to your short game

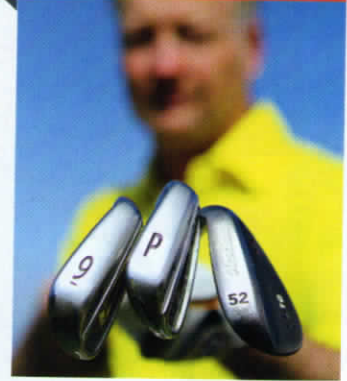


PAST THE PIN

Create a ladder effect on the green with three clubs. Aiming for the top rung will train you to be more assertive with your clubbing. Chart your progress by grabbing 10 balls and setting up a points system: between 2nd and 3rd rung = 3pts, 1st-2nd 2pts, short of first rung 0pts.

TOP TIPS

PICK A STRONGER CLUB



Don't think 'what club could I reach with?'; think 'what club could I hit to the back of the green', then deduct one!

SHUT STANCE, SQUARE STRIKE

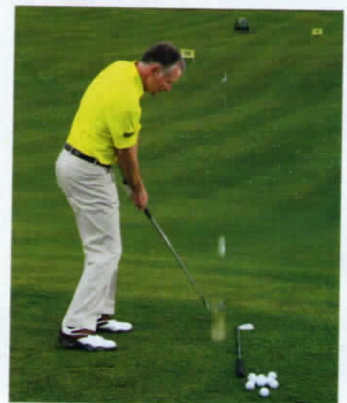


Practise with a closed stance. Swing the club through a square channel to create the feel of the ideal swing path.

THE CHALLENGE

GO ONLINE

Aggression's good but don't forget the line...



Place a club square to your intended target. Take up your new squarer stance, and see how many balls out of 10 you can hit directly over the top of the flag. Keep trying to beat your personal best.