

MAKE THE MOST OF A GREAT DRIVE BY KNOCKING IT CLOSER EVERY TIME







Welcome...

In the second of three free instructional guides to help you improve with every club, we focus on attacking the green

trokes Gained inventor and leading golf shot analyst Mark Broadie has no doubt which shot in golf is the most important.

"It's the approach shot," he argues. Broadie's research suggests approach shot quality accounts for no less than 40 per cent of the advantage elite tour pros have over the journeymen.

And in the amateur game, he believes that of the 10 shots that separate the 90-shooter from the 80-shooter, four are down to approach play.

So make no mistake about it. hitting greens has a crucial effect on the scores you shoot.

The good news is this supplement is packed with tips. drills and strategy to help you do it more accurately, more often.

You'll also learn a versatile approach game. With its range of lies, slopes and clubs, nowhere on the course do you have to be so adaptable... but from 100yard pitches to soaring fairway woods, this booklet has all the scenarios covered.

As you work on these tips, why not keep a record of how many greens you hit each round? It will help you understand your level, and provide tangible evidence of the improvement you make.

Good luck!

MEET THE COACHES

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The venue

This FAIRWAY guide was photographed at the immaculate La Reserva layout in Sotogrande, Andalucia. La Reserva joins Valderrama, Real Golf de Sotogrande. Almenara and La Canada in making up Sotogrande's prestigious quintet of golf courses.

For more information on Sotogrande visit sotogrande.com or call 0034 856 560 922.







Because the club is shorter and the need for accuracy greater, the iron swing should be more compact than a driver swing. As such, you don't need such a wide base. Keep your shoe laces under your shoulders to find the right blend of stability and mobility.

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Set up for accuracy and strike quality

SHAFT LEAN

The ideal iron address sees the hands slightly ahead of the clubhead permitting a relatively straight line between the lead shoulder and clubhead. This sets the shaft leaning slightly forward, ideal to create some downward pressure.

Good fairway play starts with an appropriate set-up. As you are hitting off the ground - and usually with some loft in your hands - your address position needs to promote a squeezing, downward strike. And with your target shifting from an endless fairway to an elusive green, your focus must switch from power to accuracy. Check out these set-up elements.

BALL POSITION

Your swing's low point is under the lead armpit. Playing the ball behind this point promotes the downward attack angle to help a lofted face transfer its force into the ball. So. just forward of centre.





Centred balance is crucial to accurate ironplay. Feel your weight is under your shoe laces, even from toe to heel and from left to right. Good posture sees your knees over your laces, your rear sticking out a little past your heels.

ALIGNMENT

Your swing path will tend to follow the aim of your feet, hips and shoulders. If you're taking dead aim, these should be parallel to your ball-target line. As a fourth reference, ask a friend to place a shaft over your forearms to check they are square.

SHAFT ANGLE

With the club soled correctly on the turf, the shaft's butt should point up to your belt buckle. For this to work properly it's vital your clubs are fitted correctly for length and lie angle; if you have doubts about yours, consult your PGA pro.



ARM/SHAFT ANGLE

One other important set-up aspect is the angle between your arms and the shaft, when viewed from up or down the line.



GET SET

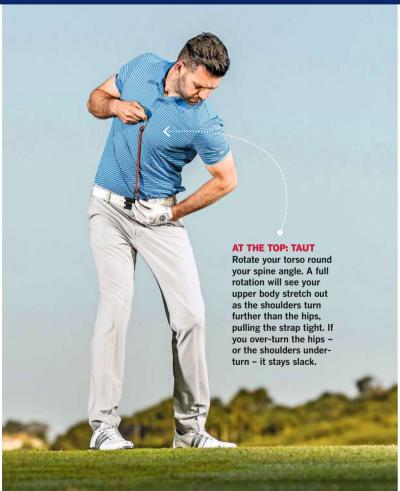
Create a subtle dimple just above your lead thumb. This angle helps you set the club on the right angle going back.



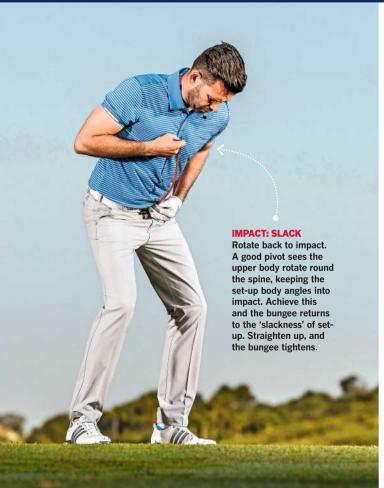


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SELECT BALL POSITION

The back foot opposite the middle of the towel places the ball 3in or 4in ahead of it for a short iron. Progressively further forward for mid-iron and hybrids sees a slightly bigger ball-to-towel gap.

LOW OBSTACLE

The towel creates a subtle obstacle to avoid, honing a smooth, downward attack angle. The bigger towel-ball gaps for the longer clubs permit the ideal shallower attack.

DRILL 1: BAG TOWEL STRIKE

Fold your bag towel into thirds and lie it across your target line, as shown.

FEEL THE SOUEEZE

All you have to do with this drill is miss the towel coming into impact. Missing the towel means powerful lag retention and a squeezing attack angle. Contact with the towel provides painless yet pronounced proof of any 'casting' or flicking at the ball.

DRILL 2: TRAIL SHOULDER OVER LEAD KNEE This swing thought will help you find better impact attack angles.

Groove a pure fairway strike

From wedge to hybrid, the ideal fairway strike is delivered on a slight downward angle. Hitting down allows a lofted face to apply pressure to the ball, creating an efficient transfer of energy. Here are two drills that will help you find this powerful, squeezing impact.





WEAK STRIKE

To understand this thought, examine this image of a typical, poor impact position. The body has stalled, the hips and shoulders are very side-on to the target, leaving the hands and arms to flap at the ball unilaterally. The trail shoulder is a long way behind the lead knee.

TRAIL ARM FORWARD

To feel a better impact, hold the club with your trail hand only and grasp your trail sleeve with your gloved hand. From your address position, simply pull your trail arm forward. As a thought, feel you are pulling your trail shoulder over your lead knee.

GETTING AHEAD

The drill lets you feel the vital upper body rotation; instead of being stuck behind the ball, pulling the trail shoulder gets the centre of it forward at impact, creating the forward shaft lean. It also sees your lead hip and shoulder open out nicely.







Watch any tour pro just before impact and you'll see a strong angle between their lead arm and the shaft. Sometimes called lag or a late hit, this angle is key if you are to create the crisp strike that means clean contact and maximum power/spin are imparted. Club golfers often throw this angle away before impact. limiting speed, strike and power. Here's how to save it.

1 Hold on to the head

An easy way to get the feeling of a later hit.



BIG SPLIT GRIP

Take a short iron and grip it in your gloved hand only. With your trail hand, hold the club up at the other end. on the shaft just above the hosel. Swing back, and turn back through to impact. Feel how this grip creates a right angle between your lead arm and shaft.

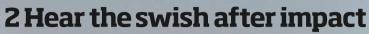
LATER RELEASE

Now, allow your gloved hand to pull the club forwards and out of the grip of the trail hand, Let the clubhead fall downwards as you pull the handle forward.

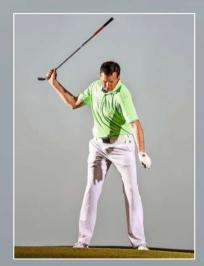


This drill gives the feel of the clubhead arriving at the ball later, after the hands have moved through, and a squeezed strike. Try it five times then hit a shot - with that later delivery.





Accelerate through impact and you'll find it much easier to create lag and a later hi



SET UP THE SWISH

Take a mid-iron. Turn it upside down and grip the hosel with your trail hand only. Take your regular stance. Swing back to the top as shown, but place your attention on the swing's post-impact area.

CORRECT NOISE

Now swing the club through as fast as possible, and listen out for the 'swish' the handle makes as it cuts through the air. With good acceleration and the creation of lag, that swish will come after the base of the swing.

ARRIVING EARLY

If you're hearing the swish before the club has bottomed out, it means you are releasing the club too early and it's slowing down into the ball. Play around with your release to get the noise later... then take the feel into your regular swing.





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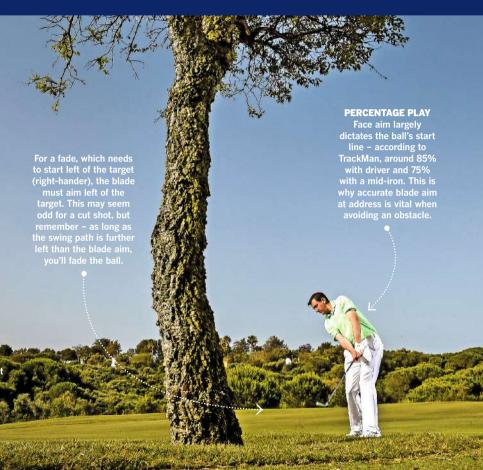
Harness your fade

Most right-handed club golfers don't have a problem moving the ball left to right, but when you are looking to fade the ball around an obstacle or into a green, it's important to have control over the ball's start line and the amount of spin generated. Use these set-up tips... and try this path drill.



AIM GAME

Begin to take your stance by aiming the blade where you want the ball to start (left of target). Then align shoulders, feet and hips further left to program a path that cuts across that blade's aim.





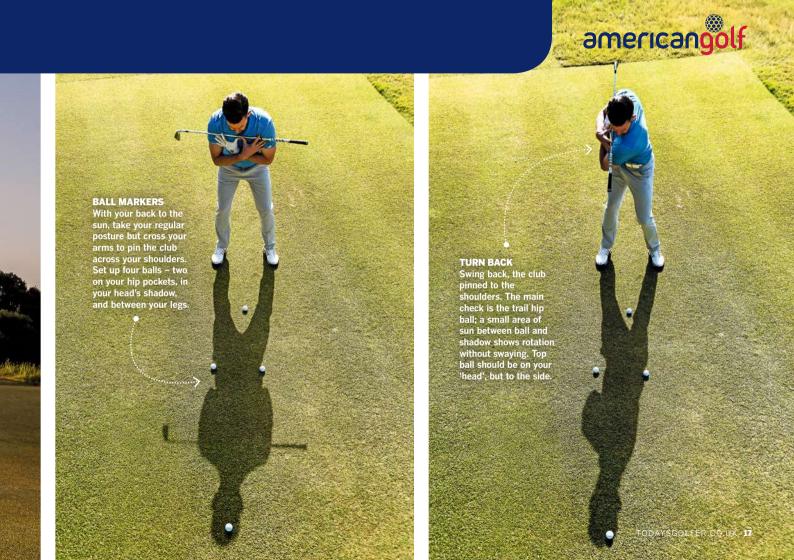


HEAD START

To hit a great fade, you need your delivery path to swing out-to-in across the blade's aim. To train this path, focus on your takeaway – as it sets up the rest of the swing. Stand on the head of your 9-iron with your trail heel, allowing the handle to stick up and out.













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BEWARE OF BETTER TIMING

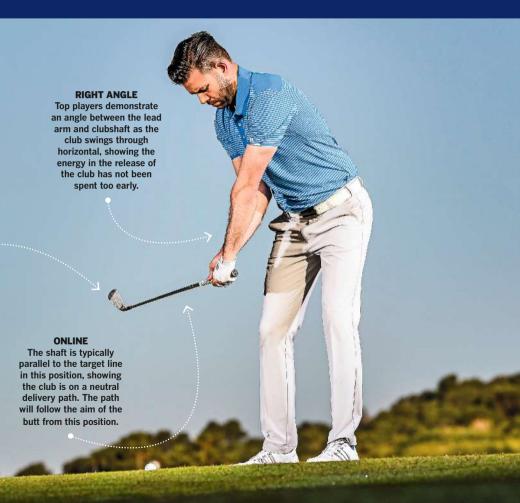
When you tell yourself to hit short of something, you can often relax and make a smoother, better-timed swing that sends the ball further than usual and often into the hazard you were trying to end up short of. Pick a club that leaves you well short of trouble.

First class delivery

Despite the variations of swing technique in the world's best players, the one area in which they are all almost identical is what's termed the delivery position. Rehearsing this can prove a great way to feel the ideal position from which to attack the ball - and to do this, focus on three moves the wrists must make to put the club in the proper slot.

SOUARE FACE

The angle of the clubface's leading edge broadly copies the spine angle at this point of the swing. If it faces the sky here, it's wide open. If it looks more at the ground, it's closed.









WRIST BOWS

Hinge the lead wrist joint back so it begins to bow. As you do this, feel how the face begins to take on an angle similar to your spine. This subtle move squares and strengthens the face for control/power.





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So your ball has just rolled off the fairway, and you still have a long way to the green. Step forward the hybrid. Its small, curved head defies snagging in tangly grass, making it the perfect weapon from semi. But to get a decent trajectory, it's important you sweep the ball forward, rather than squeeze down. Use this set-up advice, and try this drill.

SWEEPER SYSTEM

t's tempting to hit down with grass behind the ball, but a steep attack angle delofts the face and you risk smothering it. Sweep forward with a level blow instead.

IRON FAILINGS

The angular head of an iron is far likely to be caught up in longer grass than the rounded hybrid. It will sweep through the longer grass for solid contact.



To help you find this level attack, position the ball underneath the swing's low point - the lead chest/armpit. This should place the ball a couple of inches inside the lead heel.









Fire height into your woods

It's probably fair to say the biggest problem the club golfer faces with the fairway wood is getting a decent flight. With no tee to help you, you can't sweep up through the ball for your launch. Instead, you need to rely on a shallow attack angle and plenty of clubhead speed to get some air into the shot. Here is a three-stage drill that will help with both.

SPIN DOCTOR

The optimal amount of backspin helps the ball climb and keeps it in the air, but with the straightfaced fairway wood many golfers don't generate enough. Find more clubhead speed and you will create more spin.

CLEAN SWEEP

With a fairway wood you are looking to sweep the ball forward, an attack which permits a clean strike and applies maximum face loft to the ball. By shallowing your downswing you promote this sweeping impact.

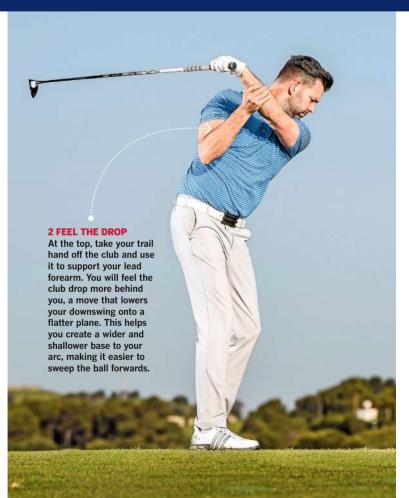


1 SWING TO THE TOP

Position the ball an inch or two inside the lead heel, and distribute your weight 50-50. Keep your eyes level at address. Take your regular grip and simply swing to the top.



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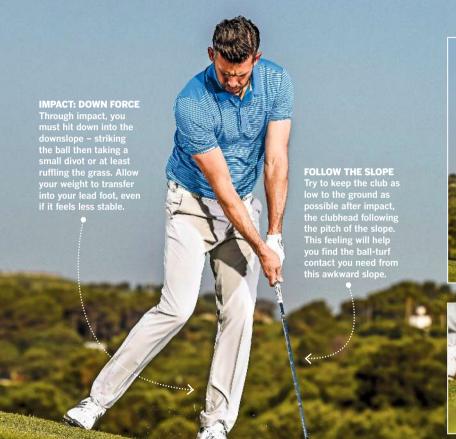




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FORWARD THINKING

Don't worry about from this stance. You still need to get your weight forward through the shot, and if walk after the ball on severe slopes. then so be it.



Imagine there is a low tee peg opposite your lead instep. Picture the club making contact with the tee after impact. Find a downslope and you can do this for real in practice.



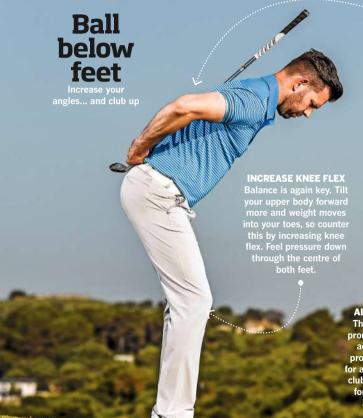




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SHARPER SPINE ANGLE

Maintain your regular gap between chest and ball to neutralise the slope's effect. That means a sharper upper body angle but don't just drop your shoulders; increase your tilt from your hips.

ALLOW FOR A FADE

This set-up and slope promote a more upright action that tends to produce cutspin. Allow for a fade, and take more club than usual to allow for the shorter swing and weaker face.



MAINTAIN YOUR SPINE ANGLE

The hardest thing about this shot is avoiding the tendency to straighten up on the backswing. Picture your address spine angle and work on rotating around it - it can help to feel your lead shoulder working down towards the ball. This will help you maintain plane and path off this awkward stance.

Steep impact: How to hit out of a divot

Any time your ball rolls into a divot – or indeed any poor lie where the bottom of the ball is below ground level – the key is to steepen your attack. It's only through a more acute attack angle that you can get the club cleanly on the ball. Use address to preset this... and use a couple of key thoughts to deliver it.

'SHORTEN' THE CLUB

Go down the grip by two or three inches to make the club shorter. When you do this, you make the shaft more vertical – which promotes a steeper swing plane.

STAND CLOSER

To accommodate the shorter club, stand a little closer to the ball. Again, this sets up a more vertical plane to the club's motion, helping you squeeze down into the ball.







Take a relatively narrow stance (wider stance encourages a flatter base to the swing). Feel slightly more pressure under your lead foot to further promote that downward attack angle.

BALL FURTHER BACK

Move impact further into the club's downward journey by playing it just inside your lead instep. Check the ball is behind your shirt buttons as you address it.

HANDS LEAD HEA

Create forward shaft lean by setting a straight line between your lead shoulder and the clubhead. The back of the trail hand should be ahead of the ball.

THREE SWING CHECKS

Make these set-up changes and executing the appropriate strike becomes straightforward. Just make sure (1) you avoid any lateral backswing sway, (2) your hands lead the club into impact and (3) you keep that lead wrist firm through this steep impact.



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1 TURN SHOULDERS AND HIPS TOGETHER

We create power by building torque through our body. But to control power, we need the hips and shoulders rotating as a unit. Place a ball against your buckle and one on your shirt buttons. At set-up one ball should be above the other.



IMPACT: STILL **STACKED**

Now turn through to 'impact'. Feel your hips and shoulders As you reach impact. check the balls are this with a club and you'll gain better control of clubhead speed and distance.





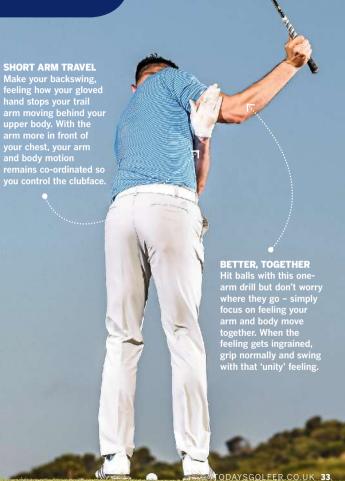


2 BUILD BETTER ARM-BODY CONNECTION

Disconnection between the arms and body – the arms usually racing ahead – also affects wedge control. Tie them together like this.

ARM PROP

Address the ball with your trail hand only. Tuck your gloved hand under the back of your trail arm, just above the elbow.







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Lie detector

When you miss the fairway, the lie you draw is pot luck. But with the lie dictating your club selection, it's a good idea to bring some discipline to reading how the ball is sitting. Apply this traffic light system for the next couple of rounds... and see how it improves your results.

How to read the lie

Base your reading of the lie on two factors. First, how much of the ball is visible over the top of the grass? And second, how much grass is behind the back of the ball? Based on those two elements. you can broadly split lies into Red, Amber and Green categories.



RED LIE - USE A WEDGE The top of the ball is below the level of the grass and there is plenty of thick grass behind it. Curb your optimism here and get the ball back into play



DOWN TO 6-IRON The ball's top third is visible and the grass behind it isn't quite so dense. You can make decent contact with a lofted club, but not below a 6-iron.

AMBER LIE - ANYTHING



DOWN TO HYBRID The ball is sitting up; you can see almost the entire sphere and there is hardly any grass behind the ball to muffle impact. A hybrid is possibl

GREEN LIE - ANYTHING



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