

Dear CRCGC member,

*Getting up and down from near to the green is not just important for good scoring - it's fundamental. To master the short game requires a lot more than just good technique. It depends on touch, confidence and imagination.*

*A mental 'picture' of every golf shot is essential before you hit the ball. "It is particularly vital in chipping, because you can't select the correct club for the job until you "see" the relative amounts of loft and roll necessary in my mind's eye. I practice chipping with various clubs and commit the results to memory. This helps me later form my 'pictures' on the course and removes guesswork from this element of my game"..... wrote Jack Nicklaus.*

*For this article, in addition to Google and Youtube, often more confusing than helpful, there are two sources for this article. Jack Nicklaus TOTAL GOLF TECHNIQUE 1983 edition and Colin Howe PLAY BETTER GOLF 2015 edition.*

*It is easy to get in a muddle about the names of the short game shots. Knowing the right name is not critical - but it can be a problem if you then confuse the associated techniques. Lets start with a short game vocabulary. Colin Howe thinks in terms of four shots:*

- pitch shot*
- lob shot*
- chip shot*
- bump and run shot*

*Jack Nicklaus thinks only in terms of a chipping shot with an ideal club for every combination of flight and roll.*

*Description of the four short game shots:*

- 1. A Pitch shot is commonly used around the green, chiefly when you need to drop the ball almost dead at your target. Its essential component is backspin. Played with a pitching wedge.*
- 2. The Lob shot is perhaps the hardest shot to play. Its purpose is to carry the ball over hazards and to stop dead after its flight. In many ways it is an extension of the Pitch shot. Played with a wedge - lob, gap, sand or pitching wedge.*
- 3. A Chip shot is used, ideally when you feel the need to drop the ball short of your target for it to run the rest of the way. Played with a 7-, 8- or 9-iron.*
- 4. The Bump and run shot is similar in some ways to the Chip shot. The key difference between the two shot types is the amount of time the ball spends in the air. Played with a 5-, 6-, 7- or 8-iron.*

*But there are many overlaps involved. You can chip from any distance, you can bump and run with more than one club and you can use your pitch and lob shot with a variety of greens. The short game depends very much on touch, confidence and imagination. Lack of confidence can often mean you hurry through with a shot and hit it thin, or nervously pull back on a shot and hit it fat. Expressed another way, you can easily decelerate the clubhead before the ball is hit and 'quit on the chipping shot.*

*A Chipping swing is above all a SLOW swing. To Jack Nicklaus that is the most important aspect. Jack seeks to make an easy-yet-firm swing, but above all a SLOW swing.*

*The focus of this article is the Chip shot (number 3 above) with a single lever motion with no real wrist hinge. This is a firm-wristed arm swing. Please note that this firm-wristed arm swing is the complete opposite to a Jack Nicklaus hand-and-wrist motion chipping shot. However, this Chip shot is a safer shot in many situations around the green, although not as effective when faced with carry-over hazards such as bunkers or a heavily contoured green. Please note that a high Pitch shot would take the contours out of the equation.*

*I, EcG, will live with that limitation of the Chip shot for now and, in the short term, develop feel, touch, slow speed, confidence and imagination using the Chip shot around the green.*

*CHIP shot technique - both Action and Effect*

*(1) Position the ball slightly back in your stance, and (2) put the majority of your weight on your left foot - creates and produces a downward blow from the golf club.*

*3) Press your hands forward so they're positioned ahead of the ball - reduces the loft of the club for lower flight.*

*(4) Grip the club as you would normally - allows more control of wrist movement.*

*(5) Choke down or grip down on the golf club grip so you can stand closer to the ball - choking down on the grip will increase your control of the golf club and make it easier to strike the ball accurately and firmly. Plus, playing the ball closer in gets better results with a straight-back-straight-through swing path.*

*(6) Narrow your stance so your feet are only a few inches apart (less than six inches) - permits better shoulder rotation.*

*My mnemonic for this technique is:*

*blanc'n see below.*

*Swing application*

*Keep your wrists firm and swing the club back only a short distance. Keep the majority of your weight on your front foot as you swing the club. Your shoulders and hips will turn only a bit. Swing forward and strike down on the ball. Keep your wrists firm as you impact the ball. Follow through the same distance as you swung the club back. Do Not MOVE your head. A STATIONARY head is an absolute prerequisite of chipping success - wait, at least, until the ball is actually just about to hit the green before you move your head and look at the ball descending.*

*Hitting the ball and turf in the correct order is an integral part of a successful Chip shot. A "ball to turf" contact is essential. Hitting the turf first results in a heavy or "fat" shot, leaving the golfer frustrated!. To Chip effectively the hands must be ahead of the clubface. Hands can then lead the entire forward stroke, helping insure striking the ball before brushing the turf.*

*In the Chip shot, the ball should have a low trajectory and roll towards the hole when it hits the green.*

*Jack Nicklaus wrote....."to me, the most important aspect of the chipping stroke is its speed. I seek to make an easy-yet-firm-swing, but above all a SLOW swing. Swing THROUGH, not AT, the ball, so that the clubhead continues at least as far through toward the target as you swung it back."*

*Jack again....."to chip effectively, your hands MUST be ahead of the clubface at impact. This relationship is most easily achieved by setting your hands forward of the ball at address".*

*Jack....." as in putting, I regard a stationary head as an absolute prerequisite of chipping success"*

*Jack....." another error club golfers make is to position the ball too far from their feet. This encourages swinging the clubhead across the target line." Because you choke down on the golf club grip you need to move closer to the ball.*

Jack...*"the most fatal chipping mistake of club golfers is to try to scoop the ball up, instead of swinging the clubhead crisply FORWARD and DOWN into the ball. To chip effectively, your hands MUST be ahead of the clubface at impact. This is most easily achieved by setting your hands forward of the ball at address."*

Jack .....*"normally, I choose the club that will land the ball four to five feet into the green (landing spot) and bounce and roll it the rest of the way to the hole. Say I'm 20 yards from the landing spot and the ball must roll 20 yards to the hole. I will probably use a 9-iron, because with this club the ball usually runs about as far as it flies. But if I'm only five or six yards off the green, I'd use a 5-, 6- or 7-iron into the green (landing spot), because the ball runs a lot farther than it carries. There's an ideal club for every combination of flight and roll. Knowing and using them will cut strokes from your game."*

Jack Nicklaus builds a mental 'picture' of every chip shot (the ball flight, the landing spot and the ball roll). That is essential before you choose a golf club and hit the ball in chipping. He selects the club to chip with based on how far the ball is from both the landing spot in the green and from the hole.

### *Situations around the green*

- 1. Chip with a Pitching wedge or Sand Wedge if your ball is close to the hole or you are faced with a carry-over hazard such as a bunker. Lofted club will produce most spin - the ball spins more and rolls less.*
- 2 Chip with 7-, 8- or 9-iron if your ball is farther from the hole, ie on the fairway. The lower loft will allow the ball to role a greater distance when it hits the green (landing spot). The 7-iron has the lowest loft and allow for most ball role with the 7-iron.*

*Mnemonic blanc'n*

*B Back - ball slightly back*

*L Left - lean weight into left side*

*A Ahead - hands slightly ahead of the ball at address*

*N Normal - normal golf grip*

*C Choke - choke down on the club grip*

*N Narrow - narrow stance*

*Hitting the ball and turf in the correct order is an integral part of a successful chip shot. A "ball to turf" contact is essential*

*Enjoy your chipping and practice the technique.*

*I have been working on this article since lockdown and practicing in the garden for two weeks - chippong up to 15 paces. I have developed more confidence with my Chip shot.*

*Since starting on this article at the start of lockdown and especially since practicing the Chip shot in the garden my two key thoughts at address are:*

- 1. Hands MUST be AHEAD of the ball*
- 2. Head MUST be STATIONARY*

*You can do it. You can B&R it - bounce and roll it - and rock and roll it!.*

*Eddie McGrath*

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