

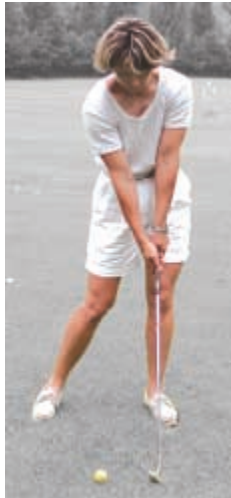


Hit down & through

Most players are afraid of hitting the ground with their club. So afraid sometimes, that they never even take a divot. But to hit a good golf shot, it is necessary to get the club under the ball !

Here are 4 Tips to help you get the club under the ball :

1. First of all, make sure the **ball is in the right position** in your stance : just left of center for short irons, a little more towards the left foot for long irons and fairway woods, and just inside the left ankle for the driver.
2. Secondly, make sure you **keep a constant body height during your swing** : to do this, maintain those two crucial angles : a constant flex in your knees, and a constant forward tilt of the upper body. Stay away from a too long backswing (overswing) or hitting with too much force (unstable), both of which destroy your rhythm and balance, which often cause you to lose those critical angles.
3. At impact, make sure your **weight is almost fully on your left leg**, so your center of gravity (sternum) is slightly ahead of the ball. If you fall back, you then have NO chance to get under your ball, for the club raises prematurely, and the fat or topped shot is then almost inevitable.
4. Finally, try to **let your arms relax naturally through impact**, allowing the centrifugal force to pull „outward“, getting the club head under the ball. In an attempt to control the club, arms usually fold, which keeps the club head higher than it should be.



Post-impact position

SHORT GAME TOO !

Just like a full shot, approaches also need to be hit with a descending blow. There too, you should practice hitting all the way to the „bottom of the grass“. That means there should be a divot too.

The smaller the shot, obviously the smaller the divot will be.

Hitting down also gives chips and pitches more backspin, which helps the ball to stop quicker !

Practice by placing a club perpendicular to your target, about 30 cm (1ft) behind the ball. It should not bother you. If it does, put your weight more fully on your left side, and focus on a spot ahead of the ball to come into the ball more vertically.

Also make sure your club does not stop in the grass, it must slide through to the target.

HOW TO PRACTICE

Force yourself to make divots, whenever you are using short irons (SW through 7 iron).

If you do not make a divot, you are too close to a „top“ and your luck will eventually run out! Also, divots should be deeper with a shorter club (the swing is more vertical).

Make sure your divot is ahead of the ball, starting just under it, but never before the ball.

Look at a point a few inches ahead of your ball, and make this point your goal. Place a tiny stone there, or plant a tee in the grass, and clip it out. Try without a ball first, then try to get the ball AND to clip the tee.

Practice in a fairway bunker : mark with a line the center of your stance, and practice placing your divot left of that line. This exercise will help you relax through the ball, as you are not so afraid of hitting the ground with your club. Make sure you finish your swing all the way through, in a normal finish position, and check that the divot goes in the direction of your target.



Place your divots ahead of the ball

Also very important to hit down and through, is the proper swing plane, and a proper use of your wrists. But this is a big chapter, and it is coming in a future column...

For now, try your best to make nice divots, (but please replace them...), and get out of your head that making a divot is a bad thing.

As long as you make them in the direction of your target, and they are starting no sooner than under the ball, only good things can happen to you !

Have fun, and enjoy the challenge of the game...

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