

## TODAY'S 2-HOUR CLINIC

## Get the Ball Close From Around the Green

Welcome. The short game is where scores are made — for most players, more than half of all shots happen from inside 40 yards. The good news: you don't need a different swing for every shot. Today we build **one reliable shot** — we'll call it your **Foundation Shot** — and then learn to make small, sensible adjustments for whatever the course gives you.

*Master one shot first. Everything else is a small tweak on top of it.*

|                                                |                                          |                                              |                                            |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 Long Putts</b><br>Grip & rolling it close | <b>2 Chipping</b><br>The Foundation Shot | <b>3 Pitching</b><br>Same shot, bigger swing | <b>4 Awkward Lies</b><br>Slopes & bad lies |
|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|

## SECTION 1

## Long Putts — Rolling It Close

On long putts, stop trying to make it. Your job is to cozy the ball into a **3-foot circle** around the hole so you're left with a tap-in. Almost every 3-putt comes from poor **speed**, not a poor read — so speed is what we train.

## How to hold the putter

- **Palms face each other.** Set both hands on the grip so your palms look at one another — like they're going to clap. This lets the putter face swing squarely.
- **Thumbs point straight down the top.** Run both thumbs down the flat front of the grip. This quiets the hands and stops the face twisting.
- **Let the hands touch / interlace.** A common, easy option is the “reverse overlap”: rest your lead-hand index finger over the fingers of your trail hand so the two hands work as one unit.
- **Soft pressure — about 4 out of 10.** Light hands feel the weight of the putter head. A tight grip kills your touch and distance control.

## Getting the speed right

- **Look at the hole, not the ball, while you rehearse.** Make 2–3 practice strokes looking at the target — like tossing a ball underhand. Your body naturally sizes the stroke to the distance.
- **Longer putt = longer stroke, same smooth tempo.** Don't stab at it. Match the length of your backstroke and through-stroke, and keep the same unhurried rhythm every time.
- **Pick a spot to “land” it, then let it roll out** to the hole. Aim to die the ball into that 3-foot circle.
- **From off the green, consider putting instead of chipping** (“the Texas wedge”). A so-so putt usually finishes closer than a so-so chip.

## Drill — The 3-Foot Circle

Drop 5 balls at 30, 40 and 50 feet. Forget the line. Score a point every time a ball finishes inside an imaginary 3-foot circle around the hole. Beat your score next time. This is how you erase 3-putts.

## SECTION 1 · STILL PUTTING

## How You Hold It Is a Preference — Not a Rule

Every player below has won at the very top of the game — and every one holds the putter **differently**. There is no single “correct” putting grip. The job of *any* grip is the same: keep your hands **quiet** so the face stays square and your speed stays consistent. Try a few — keep whichever lets you roll it smooth.



**Lee Westwood**  
**The Claw**

Trail hand pinches the grip claw-like between thumb and forefinger so it stays passive and can't twist the face.



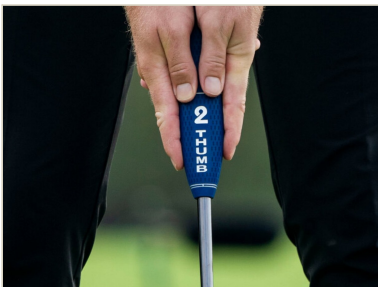
**Bryson DeChambeau**  
**The Arm Lock**

Grip runs up against the lead forearm so the wrist and putter move as one locked unit. Took him from 145th to 28th in putting.



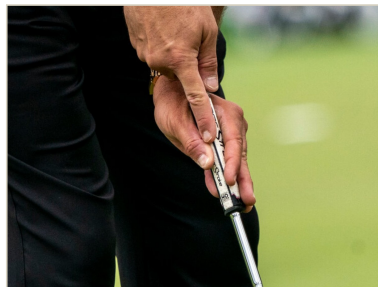
**Jordan Spieth**  
**Left-Hand Low**

Lead hand sits below the trail hand (cross-handed). Levels the shoulders and lets the lead hand control the path.



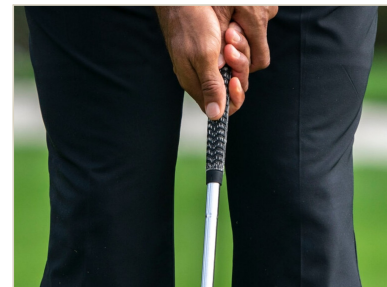
**Matt Wallace**  
**Two Thumbs**

Palms face each other, both thumbs down the top of the grip. Hands hang even for a pure pendulum. Also called the “prayer” grip.



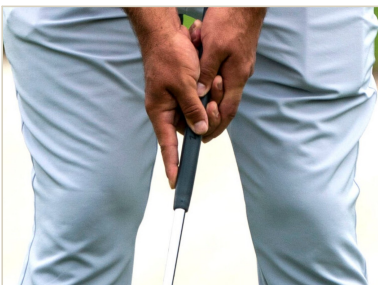
**Phil Mickelson**  
**Lefty Claw**

A claw for a left-handed player: the trail hand points down the grip for a longer, smoother stroke on fast greens.



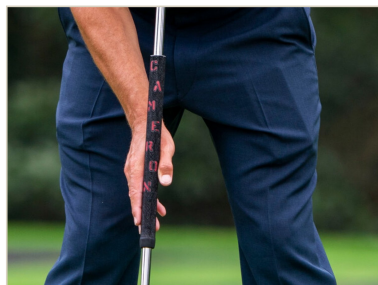
**Tiger Woods**  
**Reverse Overlap**

The most common grip in golf. The lead forefinger lies across the trail-hand fingers to unite both hands.



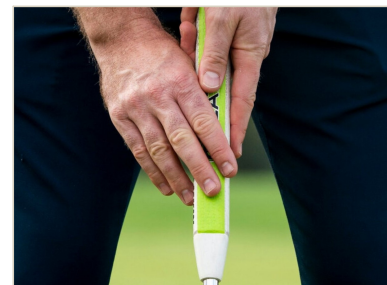
**Brooks Koepka**  
**Alt. Reverse Overlap**

Same idea, but the trail forefinger points straight down the shaft so the wrist angle never changes through the stroke.



**Adam Scott**  
**Long Putter Claw**

A longer putter played with a right-hand-low claw — no longer anchored to the chest, but still long and stable.



**Justin Rose**  
**Modified Claw**

Two trail-hand fingers rest over the top of the grip instead of the side. His reason for it: “It feels simpler.”

Bottom line: pick the quiet grip you can repeat — then own it. (Grip photos: The New York Times.)

## SECTION 2

## Chipping — Your Foundation Shot

The chip is the shot everything else is built on. It's a small shot that flies low and rolls out. We're after the same, boring, repeatable strike every time. Three simple keys make it happen:

### The three keys

- |                                            |                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1 · Use the club's own loft</b>         | Let the club do the work. Don't try to scoop or "help" the ball into the air — the loft on the face already lifts it. Trust it.                      |
| <b>2 · Hit slightly down on the ball</b>   | Strike the ball first, then brush the grass. A gentle downward hit gives clean, predictable contact. This — not scooping — is what gets the ball up. |
| <b>3 · Swing straight back and through</b> | No twisting or flipping of the hands. Keep the path simple and the face quiet so the ball starts on line every time.                                 |

### Set up the same way every time

- |                                  |                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Club sits flat</b>            | Rest the <b>middle of the sole flat</b> on the ground — not toe-up or heel-up. This is non-negotiable; a tilted club gives a glancing, unpredictable strike. |
| <b>Chest over the ball</b>       | Your <b>breastbone (and nose) sits over the ball</b> . This centers your low point so you catch ball-then-turf.                                              |
| <b>Lean onto your front foot</b> | About <b>60% of your weight on your lead foot</b> at set-up — and keep it there. This helps you hit down and stops the fat/chunk.                            |
| <b>Hands slightly ahead</b>      | Set the <b>handle a touch toward the target</b> , hands just in front of the ball. Small lean — not a big forward press.                                     |

### Drill — Ball First, Then Turf

Lay a tee or a line of chalk just in front of the ball (target side). Make chips that brush the grass **on the target side of the ball** — never behind it. When your divots start after the ball, you've found the downward strike.

## See it — LPGA star Charlie Hull's chip

Notice how **close her hands stay to her body** at address — arms relaxed and hanging, not reaching out. That's the quiet, connected set-up you're copying.



**Address — up close**

Hands hang close to the body, right under her chin



**The full set-up**

Tall & relaxed, weight into the lead side, ball back



**Through the ball**

Low and quiet — the body turns it to the target

Same Foundation Shot, top-level player: hands in tight, tall chest, weight forward, quiet through the ball.

## SECTION 3

## Pitching — Same Foundation, Bigger Swing

A pitch is your chip's taller sibling: it flies higher and longer with a fuller motion, but it's the **exact same Foundation Shot** — same three keys, same set-up. The engine gets bigger; the fundamentals don't change. Below is Rory McIlroy hitting a pitch, front-on. Watch four things.

## The four things to watch

- |                                       |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ① <b>Lead hip moves forward</b>       | The near (lead) hip starts over the ball and <b>drives toward the target</b> through the shot. Your weight goes forward — you don't hang back.                     |
| ② <b>Chest stays tall &amp; level</b> | The chest stays <b>vertical with no lean to the side</b> . He rotates around a steady, upright body — he doesn't tip or sway.                                      |
| ③ <b>Trail wrist keeps its bend</b>   | Coming down to the ball the <b>back (trail) wrist stays bent back</b> — that's what holds the loft and delivers a crisp, downward strike instead of a scoop.       |
| ④ <b>Club splits the triangle</b>     | Just after impact the shaft <b>points straight down the middle of the triangle</b> made by his arms and shoulders — proof the body led and the hands stayed quiet. |



1 • Address

Tall &amp; centered, weight forward



2 • Backswing

Chest turns, wrists set (top for a pitch)



3 • Downswing

Lead hip leads · trail wrist stays bent ③



4 • Impact

Ball first, hands lead



5 • Release

Club splits the triangle ④



6 • Finish

Fully through · hip cleared ①

Cyan arrows: chest stays vertical (upper) and lead hip drives forward (lower). Orange dashed shape: the arm-and-shoulder triangle the club swings down through.

## SECTION 4 · YOUR NOTES

## Awkward Lies — Adapting the Foundation Shot

**Mad River is anything but flat.**

You will almost never get a perfectly level lie out here. Uphill, downhill, ball above your feet, ball below — that's the normal state of play. So learning the awkward lies isn't optional or advanced. It's **non-negotiable**. The great part: you keep the same Foundation Shot and change only what the lie demands. Nothing else moves.

## When the ground is sloped

| The lie                                | What the ball does                                   | Your only changes                                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Uphill (slope up to target)</b>     | Flies higher, comes up short                         | Let weight settle onto your <b>back</b> foot (lean with the hill). Play the ball a touch <b>back</b> . Make a slightly bigger swing.   |
| <b>Downhill (slope down to target)</b> | Comes out lower & runs — <b>don't try to lift it</b> | Let weight settle onto your <b>front</b> foot. Play the ball a touch <b>forward</b> . Slightly smaller swing; accept the lower flight. |
| <b>Ball above feet</b>                 | Tends to pull <b>left</b> of target                  | <b>Aim a little right</b> and open the face slightly. Grip down and stand the club up so the sole sits flat.                           |
| <b>Ball below feet</b>                 | Tends to leak right; easy to thin                    | <b>Stand the club up</b> so the sole sits flat, get a little closer, and stay down through the shot.                                   |

## When the grass is tricky

| The lie                                          | What's going on                                          | Your only changes                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Good fairway lie</b>                          | The Foundation Shot works as-is                          | Nothing to change. Maybe add a whisper of loft. Just make your shot.                                                                                                          |
| <b>Ball sitting down (buried in thick grass)</b> | Grass will grab the club; you must reach the ball        | Lean a bit <b>more onto your front foot</b> , add a little forward shaft lean, and swing with <b>more speed</b> to power through. Add a touch of loft so it doesn't run away. |
| <b>Ball sitting up (perched on top)</b>          | It'll come out slower and higher; easy to slide under it | <b>Grip down</b> and stand a touch closer, use a <b>soft, quiet-arms swing</b> to sweep it, and add a little speed since it comes out slow.                                   |

## Before every awkward shot, ask 3 questions:

- **How much loft** do I need?
- **How much speed** do I need?
- **How steep or shallow** should the swing be?

Answer those three and you can play a shot you've never practiced. That's the whole game.



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