



Offered By Amel Mehenaoui

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Importance Of The Short Game

By definition, the *short game* is a term that describes all shots made on the golf course from approximately 75 yards toward the hole, or the 'scoring distance'. When it comes to mastering your short game, the approach is about precision, rather than distance or strength.

The ideal play is to get your ball on the green in one single shot, and into the hole in two strokes or less (on a par-3 for example).

Your success on the golf course is largely determined by how well you play the short game. Unlike other sports, your golf score doesn't rely solely on power, but rather by using your intellect, technique, and making the right decisions.

You'll often hear golfers speak of their 'approach shots' which describes each swing made towards the hole, and must be carried out with the right speed and at the perfect angle.

Chipping and Putting Secrets Revealed

Your [short game](#) must be mastered with the practice of making every shot count, in perfect order, with the right timing, and just enough strength to move the ball accordingly.

Your initial tee off and then each shot towards the hole in succession can best be thought of from the analogy of a jet airplane.

Initially, a jet takes off with as much force, power, and distance needed to become airborne. However, when it is time to reach its destination, the jet (just like the golf ball), must coast in with pinpoint accuracy, perfect execution, the right amount of speed, and fly perfectly to the landing zone.

Shots That Make Up The Short Game

The swing-types that typically make up your short game include the pitch shot, chip shot, bunker shot, flop shot, and the putt.

Pitch Shot: Pitch shots are often used when trying to get the ball over an obstacle. This type of shot generally causes the ball to go airborne for at least 75% of its movement before hitting the green.

Chip Shot: Chip shots only reach a small amount of loft, typically travel a small distance (measured in feet), and generally has a slow roll towards the hole.

Bunker Shot: As the term implies, the bunker shot is used to knock the ball from a bunker area. The average golf club used here is the sand wedge, causing the ball to fly high and land sharply near the hole.

Flop Shot: Flop shots describe a ball that becomes airborne, flies practically straight up, and lands near the hole without rolling.

The Putt: The putt shot is the very last shot made in which the goal is to sink the golf ball into the hole.

Are You Wasting Time Playing Golf?

Like any sport, your goal on the golf course is to get better, plain and simple, while reaping the benefits of the process.

Improving Your Short Game Is The Key To Advancement

There are over 36 million people in the United States alone that play golf, as reported from the National Golf Foundation. Almost half of these people are between the ages of 20 and 40 years old. Over 20% of these players are female golfers. Golf fans spend an enormous amount of money every year on golf equipment and golf course fees, over \$25 billion in fact.

\$25 billion dollars is an incredible sum of cash that results from passionate golf players. Ironically, of all this money that is spent playing golf, the average scores taken statistically have not improved that much over the years.

The overall average score is approximately 100. Only 22% of golfers score better than a 90 (for the 18 hole course). And the par on just about every golf course is 72.

Don't Be A Statistic

Not everyone who plays golf has a desire to constantly increase their score, but it's safe to say that most of us do. Statistics from the National Golf Foundation also show a poll that shows the average golfer is happy to shoot a score of around 85. Not a bad score, but perhaps it's time to kick it up a notch and learned some of the secrets to improving your short game.

What Is The Short Game?

When you think of professional golfers, the first thing that comes to mind is the vision of Tiger Woods or Greg Norman teeing off and sending the ball skyrocketing to great distances.

But these guys do not win because of their wonderful long-distance tee shots. Their golf skills are the result from making most of their golf shots from the fairway to the green: *called the short game*.

The secret to improving your score is to understanding and learning techniques to master your short game. Regardless of your score, more than half of your strokes will come from playing the short game.

Did you know that 50% of your score stems from all shots taken within approximately 75 yards from the green? This percentage includes bunker shots, chips, pitches, and of course, all putt shots.

Swallow Your Ego & Try Taking More Putt Shots

While it's true that many of your short game shots will be taken from as far as 70 to 75 feet away from the hole, others will be swung from as close as a foot or so off of the green. The short game of golf has many variables which offer you plenty of options to take when deciding on playable shots, including the weather, terrain, shot distances, the type of club used, etc.

In order to increase your percentage of scoring high and improving your results, you need to understand the art of holding back and take your ego out of the equation in order to prevent mistakes on the golf course.

Putting The Ball

Learning how to put the ball on the green is essential to improving your golf game. For example, if the ball is lying 50 to 60 feet away from the hole, it's better to putt the ball rather than send it flying through the air with brute force.

In other words, stop trying to knock the ball into the hole from too far away. You will only invite frustration and damage to your scorecard. The idea is to get the ball on the ground as soon as possible in order to bring the short game into play.

Trying to keep the ball airborne and flying it into the hole too soon, especially for beginner golfers, just creates more opportunity for disaster.

When you choose to putt the ball, you have more control and less room for error. When putting, you get to concentrate as you stand directly over your target line and use a simple backswing and follow-through. Putting the ball will not only decrease the chance of mistakes, but less work is involved in the shot.

Do You Really Want To Focus On The Following, From 50 – 60 Feet Away?

Putting takes a variety of skills, all at the same time. You must use your judgment in order to determine the proper speed and the right distance needed to line up the shot, as well as the following variables:

1. The maximum height in which you need the ball to be airborne.
2. The wind factor, and how it will affect the direction of the ball, whether it will blow the ball to the left, to the right, adding too much distance, or not enough.
3. How much spin you must generate.
4. Where exactly you want the ball to land, being as close to the hole as possible.

A Simple Step-By-Step Plan To Making The Perfect Chip Shot

During any given day playing golf, there will be times when you will have to use what is called the *chip shot* in order to hit the ball onto the green. In order to be successful at chipping the ball, you must set your stance up correctly.

This section of the book will help you to decide which club is best for hitting a chip shot, goals and expectations, and finally, how to hit the best chip you can.

Choosing The Right Club

There is no hard and fast rule on choosing the right club when a chip shot is needed to clear the ball. However, you must decide by assessing the circumstances of the terrain and how you need the ball to travel. For example, If you are very close to the hole, then you won't need much loft.

The 7-iron and 8-iron are the most popular clubs used when golfers need to make a chip shot. Their clubfaces are less lofted, which gives them more accuracy as chipping tools.

Personally, if I had to choose between the two, the 7-iron is my favorite for these types of shots.

Unless you have another preference, you should also work with a 7-iron to improve your chipping shots. And by practicing with the same club, you can master your technique.

Have Confidence In Your Chip Shot With Positive Expectations

Before we get into how to make a chip shot step-by-step, I just wanted to briefly mention the importance of having positive goals and expectations before setting up for your swing.

This not only goes for chip shots, but for every shot made on the golf course. Visualizing in your mind what you want to accomplish with your chip is vital to success.

What is an acceptable result? What are your expectations?

Your goal should be to chip your ball onto the green every time, without fail. You may not make it when you want to, but having self-confidence and the mental picture of success will not only increase your chances of hitting the ball correctly, it also calms you down physically and lowers your blood pressure (which can have a very positive effect on your swing).

How To Chip The Ball

Learning how to chip the ball properly is not rocket science, yet it does take practice and technique to get it right every time.

The following steps help break down a chip shot for better understanding:

1. Grab your club, preferably a 7-iron, and stand up close to the target line.
2. Keeping your weight in the center of your stance, open up your front foot and the shoulders toward the target. You should literally be facing the hole.
3. Take a light, yet solid grip on the club.

Chipping and Putting Secrets Revealed

4. Look at the green and select the ideal spot in which you want the ball to land.
5. Take a brief moment and visualize your swing making perfect impact with the ball, and having it land in that exact same spot.
6. Keeping your wrists firm, draw the club back and keep it low to the ground. Your turn should be rotated by the shoulders, keeping your legs and lower body out of the swing and as still as possible.
7. Now swing your club back along the target line, then downswing *through* the ball.
8. Once you make contact with the ball, keep your form solid and watch the ball hit the exact spot you aimed for, and rolling ever so slowly toward the hole.
9. Now practice your chip shot over and over, and in various terrain settings on the course.

Setting Up Your Stance For The Perfect Chip Shot

Chip shots are made by taking a stance that will put you close to the target line, so that your eyes are directly over it. The closer to the target line you are, the better the chance you have of moving the club back and hitting straight through to your target.

A Matter Of Preference

The stance you choose is largely dependent upon your personal preferences. You should feel comfortable and balanced. Try opening up your stance a bit as it may allow you to see better down the target line, thus making it easier to swing the clubhead at the intended target. When you are comfortable with your setup, your confidence increases.

Setting Up The Ball

The ball should be positioned in the middle of your stance when making a chip shot. It makes it easier for the clubhead to swing right along the target line, and at the appropriate angle.

If you move the ball backwards in your stance, it will fly lower, and moving it up a bit will cause the ball to pop higher. However, chip shots do not require any adjusting of the ball, just set up right in the middle.

Proper Weight Distribution

Your weight should be dominating through the center of your stance. This position offers perfect balance and allows you to naturally open yourself to the target. In other words, your front shoulder and toe should be slightly left, or right, of where they would normally be positioned when addressing the ball.

Generally speaking, if you need the ball to fly higher, additional weight should be placed on the front foot. For right-handed golfers, the more weight that is put on the left side, the more the club will swing up as opposed to back, and low to the grass.

Chip shots normally require the ball to fly low with a decent roll. Therefore, the best weight distribution tactic is to keep your balance and all of your weight in the middle of your stance throughout the entire swing.

The Shoulders

If your stance is open, as instructed, then your shoulders should naturally open up or angle slightly to the left of the target. You should be close to the ball so that you can look over and down towards the target line.

The Grip

Remember that the chip is not a strength or power shot. When gripping the club before your swing, you may have the tendency to tighten up too much. Try to resist this urge because too much pressure on the club can make you tense, thereby ruining the shot. A lighter grip on the club will enable you to feel the ball hitting the blade. Your focus should be on touch, not on power.

The Perfect Time To Make A Chip Shot

The United States Golf Association updates annually the official Rules of Golf, which contains hundreds of game rules and regulations that keep game enjoyably challenging.

One of the regulations, called the “Greens In Regulation” (GIR), states that you must hit the ball onto the green in a specific number of shots as determined by the par rule of that particular hole.

On a par-3, for example, you have one shot in order to get the ball on the green. Par-4 holes give you two shots to reach the green. And par-5 holes mean that you have three shots designated.

Hitting the ball onto the green within these regulations is standard procedure for the professional golfer. However, for us regular players, it is a lofty goal just to make the green in the prescribed number of shots, and on every hole. Your ball may end up just off the green, a foot away, on the collar, or in the rough near the green. So close, but yet so far!

This Is When The Chip Shot Comes In Handy

A chip shot is very similar to the pitch shot, except that the ball does not go as far into the air. It may travel just a few feet when a chip shot is made. The ball simply *chips* its way up and onto another area of the course within a short distance.

While this shot may not seem like a major technique to use on the golf course, having the skill to successfully make a chip shot when you need to is very important. It will save you unwanted strokes and will prevent you from missing the green when playing by the rules.

A chip shot can best be described with the following characteristics:

1. There is very little loft when a ball chipped.
2. When the ball is hit with a chip shot, it pops right into the air, but with a very tight arc, moving it practically straight up.
3. When the ball is hit, impact actually produces a “chipping sound”
4. Chip shots cause the ball to travel over 80% of its mobility on the ground, the initial 20% is spent from the blast off into the air.

Do You Have The Best Putter Available?

When it comes to your choices of golf clubs to carry in your bag as you play the course, the official rules state that you can have up to 14 totals. While different players may use a variety of irons and woods, there is always a putter. In fact, many opinions agree that the putter is probably the most important club a golfer has.

Statistics show that professional golfers will make almost half of their total game shots with a putter. Many players who golf regularly may carry up to four different putters in their bag, in case one of the putters is feeling a little “off”.

If you are a beginner golfer, there is no need to have more than one putter until you become a little more seasoned with the game.

What Size & Shape Putter Is Best?

If you walk into any golf store you will see a huge variety of putters that come in all shapes and sizes. However, there are just two main types of putters; the mallet and the blade putter.

Mallet putters have a large, flat sole and a rounded back. This putter is great when shooting off-center putts because the weight is evenly distributed across the face of the club.

A blade putter is a top choice due to its ability to make it easier to align with the golf ball. Blade putters also have more right angles than the mallet.

Out of all of the different sizes and shapes of putters you can find in a golf accessory store, the one thing in common you'll notice on all putters is that the clubface lines up exactly perpendicular to the target. In other words, when the putter is held properly, the face will always be pointed straight towards your target.

The only time that a putter can do more harm than good, is when a golfer accidentally bends it when he or she drops their golf bag. It happens often and can prove to be frustrating for the serious gamer. A bent putter makes it tough to align your aim, as well as hitting the ball straight.

A New Type Of Putter

There is a new breed of putter clubs on the market that is fairly recent in development. These putters have an extended shaft. Professional golfers have found some relief in this new design after experiencing problems with different shaft lengths of their other putters.

With a longer shaft, it makes it possible to hold tight to the top of the club on your chest, while at the same time using the arms and shoulder muscles to make the stroke. This new design has caught on in both professional golfers and amateurs alike.

Putting Strategies For The Beginner Golfer

Facing long putt shots are challenges in golf that be quite rewarding. And there is one thing that all golfers who are [great putters](#) have in common: they have a natural sense of *feel* for the speed and distance needed when making a long putt shot.

This *feel* is not something that you can learn from a golf “how to” booklet. It must be learned by instinct and then practiced over and over again.

Proper Speed Is Essential For Putts Longer Than 8 Feet Or More

As a beginner, you may be tempted to make your ball into the hole when facing a long putt shot of 8 feet or longer. However, this should not be your goal. Great golfers realize that it's best to lag the ball so that it gets as close to the hole as possible, thereby leaving themselves a very easy shot with only 2 - 3 feet of distance.

Of course knocking the ball into the hole from a long putt shot is definitely a good thing. But the truth of the matter is that the last thing you want to do is mess up your shot to the point where you have to make the ball in the hole with the dreaded 3-Putt shot.

So many beginner players and amateur golfers go through such an experience. They have a ball sitting 15 to 20 feet away from the hole and they put too much speed and distance on it. The next thing they realize, they have taken 5-6 shots in order to finish a par-3 hole.

How To Master The Art Of Long Putting

Your job is to become a master the art of getting a perfect lag on a ball when shooting a long-distance putt. This is so you can create a situation where the ball will always land safely near the hole, regardless of whether it breaks too early or too soon. You will know that wherever the ball lands, it should be a simple hit to finish the hole on the next swing.

A Simple Practice Exercise

As with any maneuver, practice makes perfect when learning to determine the feel for speed and distance on the green. A simple exercise that you can practice in order to become a better long-putt shooter is to place four to five balls approximately 10 feet apart from each other, evenly distributed to the hole.

Basically, you will have a line of balls, evenly spaced between each other, all leading to the hole, starting at about 40 to 50 feet out. Now start the exercise by making your swing with the ball closest to the hole. Simply work your way back to the farthest ball.

In order for this exercise to work, you must mentally place yourself in a real playing scenario.

The funny thing about such practice techniques is that because you know it's not a real game, you are more loosened up and are not really stressed about making the lag shot work.

Can you guess what happens? You play well! That is the ironic part about golf. When you are in the middle of a good game, worry and doubt tend to tense your muscles up, thereby causing poor shots to be made. The real key is to take your practice mindset with you when playing a real golf game.

Every Putt You Attempt Should Be Driven By Confidence

You have probably heard this advice before, but it is worth repeating: *Every shot you hit should have a goal behind it.*

Your scorecard can only be improved by increasing your skills and having an understanding of just how to properly prepare and push yourself on every shot you make. You should be asking yourself: *What do I expect from this shot? What is a reasonable result?*

Reasonable Goals To Better Your Score

The key to becoming a better golf player and lowering your score is to totally avoid taking too many putt shots on the green. Regardless of how well you can skyrocket the ball from your tee shot and landing it on the green within regulations, if you take an unacceptable amount of strokes to get the ball into the hole, the opportunity to better your score has been wasted. There is no excuse for this.

The Initial Goal

Do not confuse goals with expectations. An expectation is an action that is reasonable and one that should happen every time you decide on the outcome.

A goal, on the other hand, is something in which you are reaching high for, but may take a little time to reach. Once reached, the goal can then become an expectation through repetition.

The initial goal you should have in golf is to send the ball into the hole within 36 putts or fewer, on an 18 hole course. This means that you must hit two putts or less on every green.

This goal obviously becomes easier to achieve the closer you can hit the ball to the green, but those times where it lands 30 to 50 feet away from the hole, you've got yourself a major feat to accomplish. It's going to take extreme focus to make long putt shots successful.

Make Every Putt Count

By accepting the challenge of this article to play every golf game with the goal of 36 or fewer putts, you've taken a big step towards improving yourself and your skill. However, do not let this challenge get in the way of your confidence.

When facing a long putt, you may have the tendency to get lazy and lose confidence in knowing that you could make the shot. This may cause you to swing at the ball in a halfhearted matter and quit your goal before even trying.

Too Much Confidence Can Hurt

Even if the shot appears to be too easy, the same negative outcome may happen as well. You may have been very successful in getting the ball close to the hole, but feel overly confident and attack the ball with too much aggressiveness.

Instead of staying focused, your overconfidence and lack of concentration may cause an easy 2' foot putt to completely miss the hole.

How Much Practice Time Do You Spend Putting?

Hundreds of golf books and articles have been written entirely about putting. The variety of information that can be found on this simple little shot involves different putting styles, strategies, types of putters, philosophies, and individual techniques. There are even pieces of information that include scientific theories and research tests about putting.

Is Putting Really That Important To Study?

Beginner golfers, amateurs, and even some players at the professional level all tend to overlook just how integral [putting](#) is to the game of golf.

I know it sounds strange that so many golfers do not consider their putting skills to be paramount to every other type of golf shot, but you have to understand that many people have a fascination with sending the ball skyrocketing through the air from the tee and images of professional golfers sending the ball through great distances with the swing of ultimate grace, not the “boring” putt shot.

The truth is that putting is the culmination of every shot you made on each hole. Each shot you take leads up to that one defining moment when you must make the ball in the hole.

Think about it, you already got your tee shot straight and flying as far as you can. You've taken the approach shot(s) without sending the ball into the rough or other disaster hazards, and now it is on the green waiting to shine as it sinks smoothly into the hole without a glitch.

The Importance Of Sharpening Up Your Putting Skills

When it comes to scoring, putting is the most important part of golf. This final shot takes the perfect amount of speed, confidence, coordination, and precision.

You need to adjust your body and swing type so that just enough strength is used to tap the ball, while holding back the excitement you feel to be making the last shot.

And above all, what if you miss? That in itself takes great character to not “blow your top”, so to speak, out of pure frustration.

You should take the putt shot as serious as you do with every other shot, regardless of the short distance it needs to travel.

Consider a long drive that you just hit from the tee which traveled 200 to 300 yards. This giant shot counts the same as a putt: 1 stroke.








The scorecard doesn't care what type of shot you have to make. So it goes without saying that if you are going to put so much practice into your golf game, especially on the driving range, it is equally important to devote practice and skill to your putting shots.

Grow the Game of Golf in Your Child's Heart and Soul

The Junior Golf Guide is a resourceful parents' guide that helps introduce kids and teens to golf, and offers advice and recommendations to [sports parents](#) about [junior golf school](#), [junior golf tournaments](#), golf fitness, [healthy nutrition for young athlete](#), [golf mental game](#), [junior golf equipment](#) and more.

I post practical information on my Junior Golf Blog regularly, so be sure to check it out at: <http://www.junior-golf-guide.com/junior-golf-blog.html>

I also publish a Junior Golf Internet Newsletter where parents can learn:

-  Positive golf mental tips you can use to help improve your kid's golf game.
-  Practical advice about goal setting activities to help your kids achieve their goals.
-  Healthy nutrition advice to help your young athlete maintain health and optimize performance.
-  Junior golf equipment reviews to help you choose the right equipment for your kid.
-  Junior golf Special Events, Tournaments and News.
-  Junior-Golf-Guide website updates.
-  ...and a whole lot more!!!

About the Author



Amel Mehenaoui

<http://www.Junior-Golf-Guide.com>

My name is Amel, and I'm a mother of 2 wonderful kids. I have created the Junior-Golf-Guide website to share my passion for golf with you.

I am a passionate golfer and I have always been impressed and fascinated by Tiger Woods, who won his first competition at just eight years old during the Junior World Tournament in 1984.

So, during summer 2005, and with Tiger Woods' example in mind, I started to think about getting my 3 years old daughter into golf. I spent so much time researching and reading articles and programs about golf for children that...I came to the following conclusion: Why not compile my experience, all the research, reviews, and interviews, and share them with parents and people interested in junior golf like me?...Yes, this is how the Junior-Golf-Guide website and The Ultimate Junior Golf Guide book came to life!