



CHIP LIKE THE BEST

Copy Jason Day to get up and down more often

PICTURES BOB ATKINS

One of the features of Jason Day's ascent to world number one has been his short game. His chipping action is a bit different; his hands and wrists are almost entirely wooden from start to finish, while his body rotates strongly. This technique isn't entirely new – Steve Stricker has used a similar method for a while – but Day's employment of it has seen its popularity rise. But what's the point of it, and how does it work? This article explains both, revealing a method that'll make your control shots much more reliable.

TG TOP 50
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FELLOW OF THE PGA



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Mission control: How Day does it

His action is designed to harness clubhead speed and face loft, and the distance he hits the ball. Here are its four key principles

Body drives the club

Day's technique is what we might call a one-lever system. In this system the one lever is the lead arm and club, which body rotation carries back and through. It promotes a consistent arc and contact.

Downward strike

A descending blow is key to controlling impact point and impact face loft. But the attack is not so steep that the digging leading edge hits the turf; ground contact is still through the rounded sole of the club.

Wrists don't cock

Wrist cock is a second lever most golfers use. It can add feel, but it also creates the potential for extra speed; ultimately it can make club speed, impact point and even attack angle more variable.

Face loft retained

We set face loft at set-up but excessive hand/wrist action can hood the blade, delofting it, or fan it open, adding loft. By keeping his wrists quiet Day retains address loft through impact to the end of the swing.

Chip
Principle

#1

Set up a controlled downward attack

Use your address to create the descending strike that promotes the right contact with the ball...and the turf

Create shaft lean

Check your hands are just forward of the clubhead. This encourages the correct attack angle – downward, but not so steep that the leading edge digs into the turf.

The 'three points'

Focus on your lead shoulder, gloved hand and clubhead. In Day's technique their set-up relationship remains intact throughout. Keep this as a goal for your action.

Weight on lead side

Feel extra pressure under your lead foot, and keep it there throughout. It will help you pivot around your lead leg, promoting strike angle control as well as a downward blow.



Chest reference

Use your chest, not your feet, to guide ball position as your sternum controls where the club arc bottoms out. Because we want a slight descending strike, set up with your shirt buttons over the front edge of the ball.



Halfway hold

Where you put your hands on the club affects distance, as you can make the club longer/more powerful or shorter/weaker. So keep this consistent. For 90% of control shots halfway up is a good guide.

Chip
Principle

#2

The body drives the club

Follow this four-step process to make sure your core rotation leads the club's movement back and through

1



Rotate away Start with hands on opposite shoulders, forearms crossed. Now rotate your body away from the target. As you turn, ensure your weight remains under your lead foot and there's no lateral movement.

2



Whole trunk turns Now turn through, keeping that pressure under the lead foot constant. Feel your entire trunk rotating as one. This is a full-body swing, so if the chest is working so must the hips and legs.

3



Connected motion To bring this same motion closer to swinging the club, grip the club in your gloved hand only. Place your other hand on your upper lead arm to help connect your lead arm to your body. This encourages body rotation to move the club.

4



Core control Keep that connection right through to the finish. Hit five balls like this before repeating the drill by swinging with your trail arm only, your gloved hand on your trail arm. Finally, put both hands on the club and hit five more chips; you'll feel your core controlling the motion.

■ Thanks to Reigate Hill GC, Surrey for the use of their superb practice facilities.

Chip
Principle
#3

The wrists don't cock

Keep your wrist action muted to gain extra control over the speed of the club, and the distance you hit the ball



Avoid a thumbs-up

Focus on the top of your gloved-hand wrist, just below the base of the thumb. When you grip the club at set-up this zone is almost flat; make some one-handed backswings, ensuring you don't add any angle.

Cock unsure

Collecting and releasing wrist angles is a mechanism for creating speed, and sharp acceleration in the club makes control of distance much harder.

Muted wrists

A striking aspect of Day's chipping action is how short the club travels in relation to the strong body turn. Much of this is down to keeping wrist action very quiet.

Check point

Swing back, using the trunk rotation we learned in Principle 2, till your hands reach hip height. Check the clubhead is still slightly lower than your hands at this point.



Change the club, not your technique

Day's action is built on removing as many variables as possible, and changing clubs is part of that. Instead of altering your action to alter height or distance, take more or less loft and let the club do the work.

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Principle
#4

Clubface loft remains constant

A wrist-free action helps you apply your intended loft to the ball, improving flight and distance control



Lever intact

In Principle 1 we talked about the swing's lever of lead shoulder, gloved hand and club. Quiet wrists keep their relationship intact to the end.



Trail elbow folds

Allow your trail elbow to fold as the club swings back. It helps the core to control clubface rotation, which lets you maintain your set-up loft.



Locked out

Watch for the trail arm remaining locked and extended. It tends to hood the blade, strengthening the face and sending the ball out faster and lower.

Loft check

When you retain your address position loft, the club's leading edge will broadly match your spine angle – on both sides of the ball. Check this both back and through (left).

Better by degrees

Excessive wrist play tends to open or close the face, adding or reducing loft. It means the ball either flies too high and short, or too low and long. Quiet wrists mean consistent distance.



THE NO-RISK FLOP

The new, foolproof way to play greenside finesse shots



Finesse shot is a phrase that conjures images of great artistry, skill and educated hands, all supposedly needed to play delicate greenside lobs. But unless you're a tour pro, how do you find the time to build the sort of skill levels needed to succeed with high-tariff greenside shots? If we do take the shot on, the usual experience is failure, born of a lack of confidence.

But the good news is you don't have to be highly skilled to play effective flop shots. In this article you'll learn a new technique that takes all the risk of the shot, while delivering the high-launching, soft-landing flight you need. I've seen it work time and again with the folks I coach, and I'm confident it'll work for you too.

TG TOP 50
MATTHEW BLAKE
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The new flop stance

This new technique blends a shallow, downward attack with a relatively wristless swing. Set this up with your address position



What we're moving away from

The traditional flop technique means opening the stance and face and using plenty of wrist action to cut the ball up. It promotes a glancing blow that causes problems with strike, direction and distance control.



Stand square

For this shot we are going to forget hitting across the ball and instead hit straight up the back of it. So aim feet, hips and shoulders parallel left of the target. It's easier to get a true idea of ball position from a square stance.

Ball forward

While a downward attack promotes clean contact, we also need to present face loft to the ball. So play the ball just inside your lead instep to soften the descending blow.



Hands just ahead

Check you have some forward shaft lean, created by the hands being ahead of the ball. This ensures you'll deliver the club on the desired downward arc.

Weight forward

Centre your weight over your lead leg – even go up on the toes of your trail foot to accentuate this. This moves your shirt buttons ahead of the ball, setting up a descending attack.



Shot on location at the beautiful Alcanada GC, Majorca, recently voted one of Spain's top 5 courses. Visit golf-alcanada.com

Backswing: Wrist-free

Your key backswing thoughts are width and extension, while keeping your weight firmly planted over your lead leg

Resist swaying

Keep your weight planted on the lead foot. Keeping your trail foot up on its toe will help you. It kills swaying and promotes a consistent strike point.

Passive wrists

Keep grip pressure light and avoid any tendency to cock your wrists. It helps you keep the clubhead under control and allows you to retain width.

Repeat the drill

Make your backswing, looking solely to let your trail arm find the position you have just rehearsed. Let your lead arm go along with the trail.

Trail arm extends

To feel the framework for this new technique, take your trail arm off the club and extend it behind you until it's parallel to the ground. This gives you the feeling of wristless width, as you want in your action.



Impact: Strike the match

To grasp the way we want the club to impact the ball, picture the firm downward push of a match head against the box



Tee clipper

Place a tee peg six inches or so in front of the ball, on your target line. Leave a cm or so above the grass. Your goal is to strike both ball and peg. You can only do that through a sweeping, downward attack.

Box striker

Now hit the ball. Aim to repeat the tee peg drill; feel the sole of the club push into the ground post-impact, just as you would feel a match pushing against the striker.

Total control

This technique allows you to pop the ball up softly without the need for high skill or trained hands; it can all be achieved by keeping the wrists quiet and letting club loft do the work.

Impact: where it all comes together

This matchbox-style strike lets you hit down on the ball while preserving clubface loft. It delivers a clean strike with all the quick height you'll need.

