

BY
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GET IT THERE

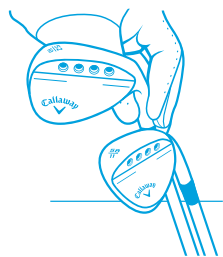
WHY YOU SHOULD SWING EASY WITH SHORT IRONS

Generally speaking, avoid trying to hit your short irons hard. The more aggressively you swing, the more height you're likely to create with those lofted clubs, so the ball will tend to go a shorter distance. If you're lucky, you might get to the front of the green — that's why you see so many approach shots come up short of the flag. There's a much more effective and reliable way to hit your short irons. Start by following these simple steps.

David Leadbetter operates 25 golf academies worldwide.

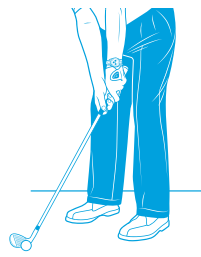
A SHORTER FINISH MEANS YOU TOOK ENOUGH CLUB AND GEARED DOWN.

1 MAKE THE SMART CHOICE



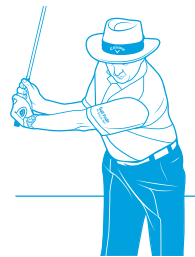
» Club selection is Step One to controlling distance. Let's say you're 90 yards out, and you know that's the maximum you can hit your sand wedge. Instead of pulling that club, take a longer one, like your gap or pitching wedge, to hit the shot.

2 GRIP DOWN, STAND NARROW



» To limit how far the ball flies with the longer club, grip down an inch and stand with your feet closer together than normal. These two adjustments will help you gear down, which should prevent you from hitting the less-lofted club over the green.

3 SHORTEN YOUR SWING



» There's no need to make a big turn off the ball or finish with the club wrapped around your body. Instead, shorten the swing. Feel as if you're making a backswing half as long as standard, and finish with the club still in front of your body.

4 DON'T TRY TO FORCE IT



» Resist the urge to swing hard. There should be no appreciable effort to get the ball to the hole. Just make a smooth and rhythmic motion. The ball will come off the club lower and more accurately, so your next shot will be a makable putt.

DROP THE ACT TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF RULE 20-2

1 You place a tee in the ground to help mark the area where you intend to drop and then let the ball fall. The ball lands and stops in the drop area, but not before skimming the tee. Should you re-drop?

2 Watching your opponent take a drop, you see he holds the ball at shoulder height but flicks his wrist as he lets the ball fall, putting extra spin on it. If you call him out for doing that, can he correct the mistake without penalty?

3 Before taking a drop, you grab another ball from your bag and drop it to see what the outcome might be when it's time to do it for real. Is this allowed?

4 A bush within the proper drop area catches your ball on the way down, and the ball gets stuck in its branches without ever touching the ground. Re-drop?

5 You drop a ball near the edge of a bunker, and it rolls in. Re-drop?

6 As long as you extend your arm and let the ball fall from your hand, does it matter how high you position your arm?

7 Your opponent attempts to drop within two club-lengths of a lateral water hazard. The ball rolls into the hazard, requiring him to re-drop. Instead of doing that, can he choose another relief option — such as returning to the spot of his previous stroke?

8 A course enacted a Local Rule allowing for a drop zone on its island par-three. You choose to use the zone after plunking one in the water. You drop your ball, and it hits inside the zone but rolls away from the hole two inches outside the zone. Re-drop?

9 You realise your ball will be lost forever in a water hazard after taking a drop outside the hazard but on the slope of its bank. Can you drop the ball and stop it from going into the water as long as you wait until after it crosses the margin of the hazard?

ANSWERS

1 No. A small object like a tee or coin used to mark the drop area isn't considered equipment (DEFINITIONS). If it were on the ground for another reason and the ball struck it, you would need to re-drop.

2 Yes. If he doesn't re-drop properly, it's a one-shot penalty (DECISION 20-2A/2).

3 No. It's contrary to the purpose and spirit of the rules (RULE 1-4). Penalty is loss of hole in match play or two shots in stroke play (DECISION 20-2A/8).

4 No. The ball was in play when it struck the course within the proper area (DECISION 20-2B/1).

5 Yes, even if the ball didn't roll any farther than the prescribed distance, such as two club-lengths (RULE 20-2C(1)).

6 Yes. Your arm needs to be at shoulder height (RULE 20-2A).

7 No. Once he dropped correctly under an applicable rule (26-1C), if a re-drop is required, the other options are no longer permitted (DECISION 20-2C/5).

8 No. The ball does not have to rest in the zone (APPENDIX 1-A-6).

9 Yes (DECISION 20-2C/4). If a ball rolls to a place where a re-drop is required (e.g., a hazard), you can grab it before it stops, provided it's likely it would not leave that area.

photo by Dom Furore, illustrations by Todd Detwiler