COVER FEATURE

PLAY YOURSELF BILLIAN STATEMENT OF THE S

Improve while you play with these on-course tips. With **Gareth Johnston** and **Steven Orr**

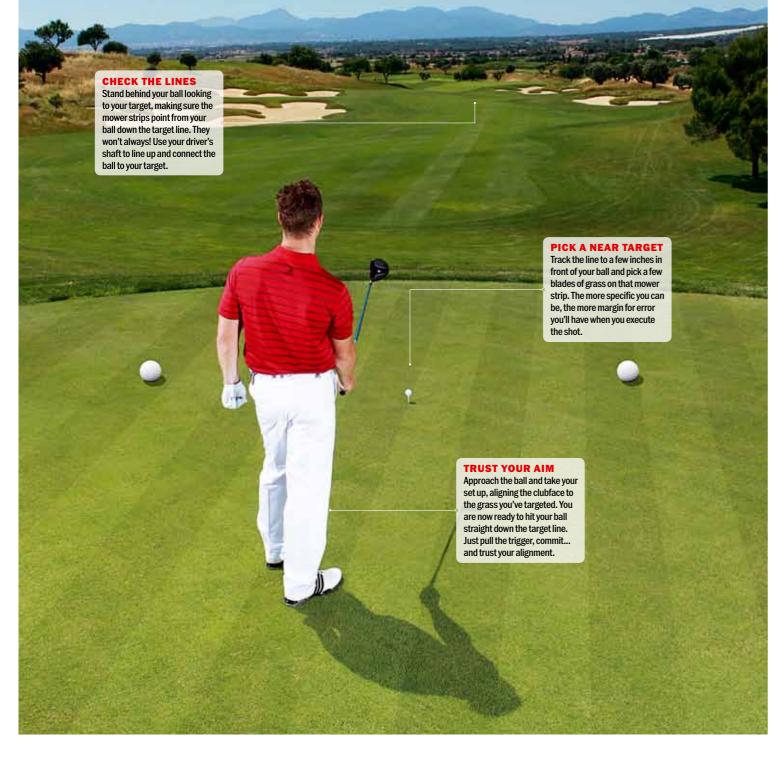


Use the tee to help alignment

Find the fairway every time by taking advantage of your greenkeeper's work

We're often all too quick to blame a bad golf swing when we miss the fairway off the tee, but have we ever considered the possibility that we hit the ball exactly where we were aiming? Perhaps we just weren't aiming in the right place. If you think you've made good golf swings early in your round but you're not

finding the short grass, it's most likely that your alignment needs adjusting. A great way to be sure you're aimed correctly is to use the mower strips on the teeing ground. Use these strips for starting the ball on the right line, for aligning your feet, or both. Use this routine to take 'Dead Aim' on the tee.





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Change your grip to kill a slice

One simple grip change and swing thought is all it takes to sort your slice

You've developed a weak slice out of nowhere and it's costing you distance... and shots. It's a fault that you need to fix - and fast - if you're going to save your round. The two major causes of the slice are an open clubface through impact and a swing path that works excessively from out-to-in, across the ball. The

TOE PASSES HEEL

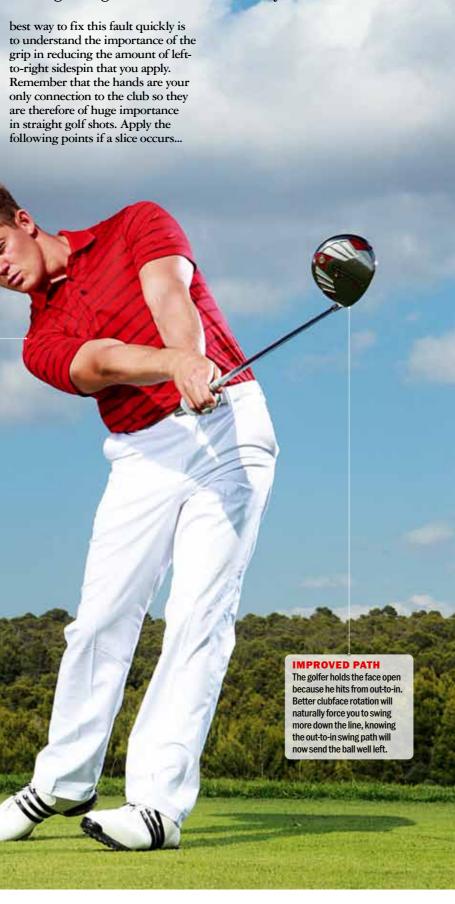
A slicer will naturally 'hold off' the clubface through impact, so try to imagine the toe of the club overtaking the heel through impact, ensuring the face 'squares up' sufficiently to eliminate the sidespin.

TOP HAND HOLD



ROTATE FOR STRAIGHT

Turn the left hand more over the top of the handle so you can see three or four knuckles with a short left thumb. A short thumb promotes wrist and forearm rotation through impact and seeing three or four knuckles dynamically assists the rotation of the clubface through impact.



When to think... and when to play

Improve your shot success by getting your thinking done before you hit shots...

It's important to understand that technique and rehearsal drills should be left on the driving range. Bringing these thoughts to the course can lead to excessive tension. resulting in poor shot execution and a drop in performance. The way to combat this problem is to imagine a line on the ground, behind the ball

and at right angles to the target. This line forms two zones: the 'think' zone and the 'play' zone. This is perfect for golfers who tend to think too much over the ball. This is especially useful if you've had a lesson the day before you play. See more strategy tips at www.todaysgolfer.co.uk/playitsafe

TO THE TG WEBSITE FOR MORE ON-COURSE **TUITION**

COMMIT BEFORE HIT

In the 'think' box, gather all your information, visualise your upcoming shot and make your practice swings. Make sure you've committed to the shot in your mind before stepping over into the 'play' zone.

12-SECOND LIMIT

The aim is for golfers to get the shot away in under 12 seconds. Any longer than that and statistics have shown that the golfer will be doing some kind of thinking that should have occurred in the 'think' zone.

2. PLAY ZONE

The zone in front is the 'play' zone. Once the golfer steps over the dividing line into the 'play' zone, the thinking stops. All that happens here is that the player executes the shot and nothing else.

1. THINK ZONE

relevant swing thoughts

The zone behind the line is the 'think' zone. When in the 'think' zone, the player is allowed to plan the shot, choose the appropriate club, nick an aim point and think about any

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Become a consistent pitcher

Stop fat and thin pitch shots by employing a safer technique

During some rounds, we have an inexplicable inability to strike pitch shots correctly. Whether we're hitting them fat or thin, mis-struck pitch shots generally occur when a golfer isn't positive through impact and tries to help the ball into the air with poor positioning of the body weight. This could be down to

tension or poor technique, but either way, it needs addressing if you're to score well for the rest of the round.

A pitch shot requires a slightly descending blow and a committed throughswing so apply these simple techniques to overcome those pitching nightmares.

BALANCED LENGTH

Make a backswing and through swing of equal length. Imagine a clock face around your body and swing from a 9 o'clock to a 3 o'clock position, making sure the throughswing feels faster than the backswing.

CONSISTENT TEMPO This gradual acceleration helps to swing positively and commits you to the shot. The ball may roll slightly more than normal using this method but it is a surefire way to improve the consistency of strike.

PITCH CLUBBING

KEEP A STRAIGHT FACE Take a stronger club than you're used

to, for example a pitching wedge over a sand wedge. This, coupled with an accelerating rhythm, allows you to swing knowing that you have enough club to get the job done.



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Mnock in more short putts

Be confident from three feet with this simple line drill

Missing short putts early on often sets a trend mentally for the rest of the round. We sometimes accept that this is what's going to happen for the remaining holes and there's nothing

we can do about it. But this is not the case. Put any early misses down to a lapse in concentration and then adopt this routine, designed to boost confidence through better aim.

Holing a few short putts can make a huge difference to your score. See FREE video tips on how to hole

more putts at www.todaysgolfer.co. uk/shortputts

> 3. SQUARE BLADE Once you have aligned the line on the ball to your chosen path, take great care setting the

putterface behind the ball,

square to that line. Always aim

stance; set up around the club.

the blade before taking your

2. GET IN LINE

Lower yourself behind the ball and assess the break on your putt. Once you've established the line, for example a 'right edge' putt, align the line you've drawn on your ball to that point as accurately as possible.

SEE TG'S WEBSITE FOR MORE **PUTTING** DRILLS

AIMING THE FACE



USE PUTTER MARKINGS

Putter makers put lines on the putter for a reason - to help you aim the face. Make sure you use them. Place your clubhead behind the ball aligning the lines on the back of your putter with the line on the ball. You are now assured that your clubface and therefore ideal putter path are aligned correctly every time you have a clutch putt. Knowing this will help give you the confidence to stroke it home.

1. MARK YOUR BALL

Draw a straight line on your ball using a marker pen over the logo of your golf ball. The line will be a great tool for aligning the putter face on your chosen line of putt and will help you commit to the putt.