

{ COVER FEATURE }

THE NEW WAY TO PLAY

There are a lot of shots that most golfers never dream of attempting, but **Gareth Johnston** reckons you'd save shots if you did. Here are his tips...

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Most club golfers have a pretty good idea about which type of shot to play in any given situation – what club to hit, how to set up and how far to swing the club. This thought process is dictated by which shots we practise and therefore feel most

comfortable on the course.

But this doesn't necessarily mean they're the best. This feature offers 13 alternative shots to play in different situations that, given a bit of practice, could become your 'go-to' shot under pressure. We've even got three TG readers to put our

theories to the test to prove that these unorthodox shots aren't just for show. In fact, the results (see page 34) are staggering!

So take some time to practise your favourites and add to your repertoire. Your scores are certain to come down as a result.



{ SHOT 1 }

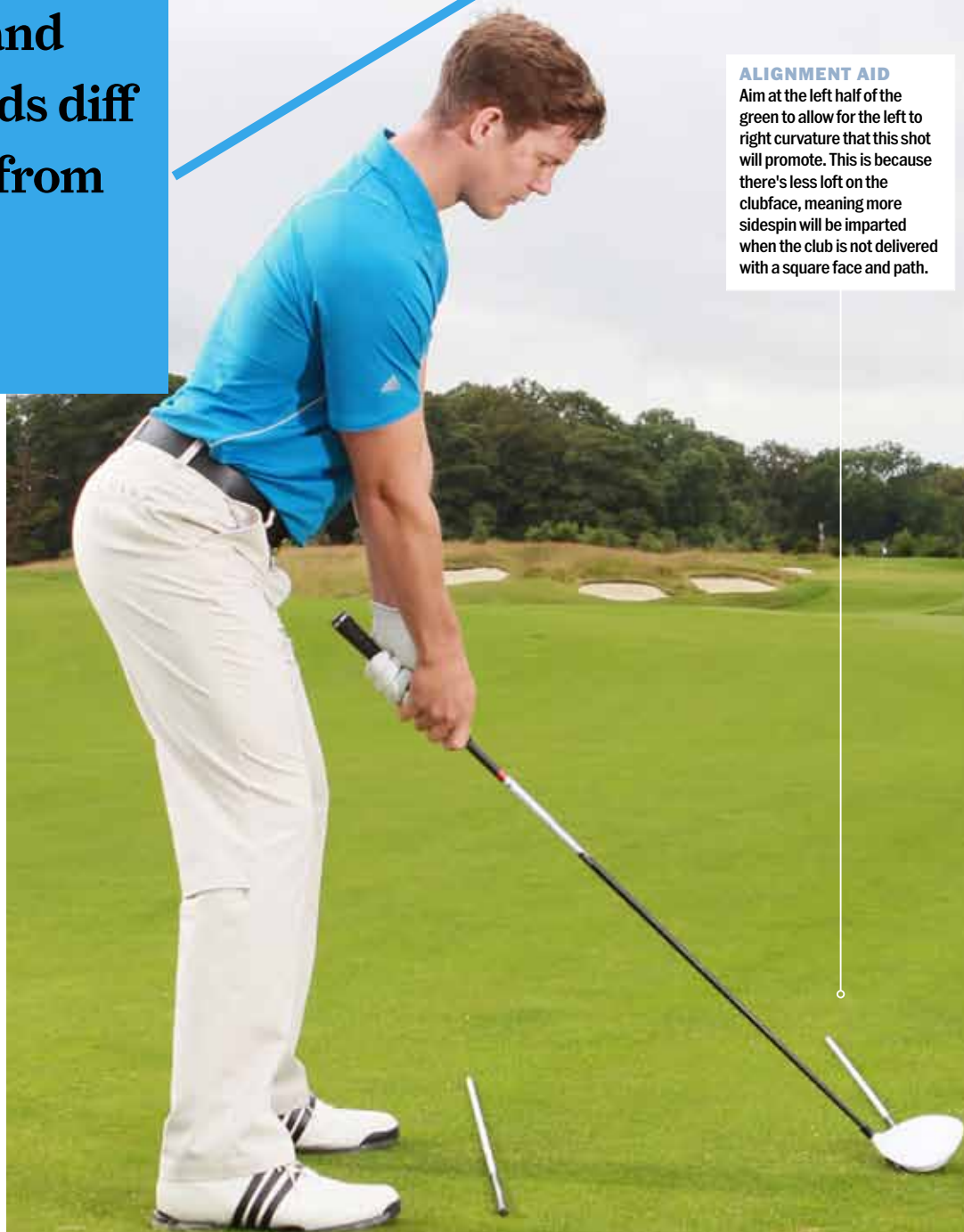
Driver off the deck

Drivers are designed to be used with the ball teed up... but you can hit one from the fairway if you employ the correct technique. This shot

is ideal when you want to keep the ball low into the wind on a long approach, providing there are few obstacles between your ball

and the green. When you're feeling confident with your swing, give it a go using these tips. It's not as hard as you'd think.

Remember
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ALIGNMENT AID

Aim at the left half of the green to allow for the left to right curvature that this shot will promote. This is because there's less loft on the clubface, meaning more sidespin will be imparted when the club is not delivered with a square face and path.

ADDRESS



PLAY IT LIKE A 3-WOOD

Position the ball much like you would for a 3-wood, two inches inside the left heel. This makes it easier to feel the sole of the club burn a small divot and deliver the clubhead to the ball with a slightly downward blow, catching the ball first.

BACKSWING



ADD CONTROL

Choking down on the grip and swinging back slightly shorter than you would do for a driver off the tee provides additional control of the clubhead and ball flight. It also helps with the timing of the more advanced contact point.

STRATEGY



PRACTICE SWING

Don't step into the ball until you've brushed the turf correctly in your practice swing. This gives you confidence to replicate this in your actual swing and commit to the shot. Your followthrough will be abbreviated like your backswing.

SHOT 2 PUTT OUT OF THE TOE ON DOWNHILL PUTTS

Club golfers often struggle to commit to lightning-fast downhill putts in fear of finishing four feet past the hole. A

good way to deaden the strike and take speed out of your roll is to strike the ball deliberately out of the toe...



KEY CHECKPOINTS

Adopt all regular points for your putting: Eyes over the ball, ball forward of centre but address the ball in the toe end of the clubface. This area is away from the sweetspot and the ball will come off the face with less speed and give you a softer roll down the hill.

SHOT 3 ONE LEG OUT DOWNHILL BUNKER SHOT

This unflattering address position in sand will actually help you achieve a stable base and extract the ball from

tricky sloping lies in sand. Remember to always swing along the gradient of the slope.



ALL IN THE SET-UP

Position the ball closer to the higher leg and the weight in the lower leg. This is for balance and to help you contact the sand in the correct place. Allow the back leg to soften to lower your centre of gravity and accelerate the clubhead through the sand.

SHOT 4 CHIP-AND-RUN WITH A 3-IRON

With this inventive shot, you don't need to worry about the strike. Using a 3-iron from just off the green is a good option when the flag is far away. Obviously it requires a bit of practice to work out

the different lengths of swing required to send the ball different distances but once mastered, this shot is a powerful one to have at your disposal from around the fringes.



WHEN TO PLAY IT

Remember that this shot is designed to 'pop' the ball over the fringe and the low loft will give you the roll and distance required. A good guide on when to play the shot is when you're two club-lengths from the edge of the green and have a good lie.

ADDRESS



SET UP TO SWEEP IT

With your putting grip, position the shaft vertically. This helps the sole of the club glide over the turf, preventing the leading edge digging into the turf. Stand with your feet close together and 60 per cent of your weight on the left side to create the correct angle of attack.

{ SHOT 5 }

Chip with a 3-wood to an elevated green

The 3-wood is perfect for this shot. The sweetspot on the clubface is huge, making a mis-strike almost impossible and the length of swing required is very short because

of how explosive the clubface is compared with that of a putter. The lack of loft also gets the ball rolling very early, before the speed in the ball is killed by the slope. If you're a

sceptic, check out the results when three TG readers tried this option over what they'd normally play. The results are phenomenal and proves it's worth trying different shots.



ADDRESS



OPEN UP YOUR STANCE

Open the feet and hips but keep the shoulders square, creating a position that allows you to rotate and follow through with commitment. You are deliberately trying to land the ball into the slope before the green to take speed out of the shot.

IMPACT



ADOPT QUIET WRISTS

The clubface of a 3-wood is generally more springy than a wedge so a smaller chipping stroke is required with no wrist action. Unnecessary wrist action will add too much speed to the clubhead and cause the ball to travel too far on such a short shot.

FLIGHT AND ROLL

Using your 3-wood here ahead of any other club will launch the ball slightly off the ground yet optimise the amount of roll and forward momentum for the ball to travel up the slope. The wider sole adds to the margin of error for the strike.

{ SHOT 6 }

Hit a raking draw from the rough with an 8-iron

This shot is designed to turn a lofted club into a much stronger one, creating a more penetrating ball flight and plenty of topspin in the process. Your ball

should come out hot, running much of the distance towards the green.

Only use this shot if your route to the green is relatively clear.

CHANGE YOUR SET-UP

Move the ball back, turning the club's loft from an 8-iron to a 5 or 6-iron. This shaft lean also provides the essential steep angle of attack to deliver the loft to the ball and stop any snagging effect from the grass. Aim right to allow for the draw spin.



DELIVERY



KEEP THE HANDS AHEAD

Position the bodyweight and swing centre slightly ahead of the ball to enhance the steep angle of attack required and to control the trajectory. A good feeling to adopt for this shot is the hands leading the delivery into impact.

RELEASE



FOREARM ROTATION

You must allow the forearms to rotate to create the right-to-left spin essential for the forward momentum on landing. Curtailing the followthrough will occur as a result of the changes to your swing and give extra control of the trajectory.

SHOT 7 BACKWARD LOB WEDGE NEXT TO A BUNKER



WHAT NOT TO DO!

In a situation like this, with the ball level with the knees, playing the shot standing in the bunker is a very risky option. The likelihood of a decent strike is very small.



! Practise this shot first: if you inadvertently hit yourself with the ball you will incur a one-shot penalty!

TRY THIS OPTION

With your back facing the target, position the ball level with the balls of your feet three inches away. This may need to change depending on your height and length of your arms.



SWING WITH JUST THE ARM

Make a small arm swing with very little wrist hinge, brushing against your side to control the length of the arc and distance the ball will travel.

Please sort these
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{ SHOT 8 }

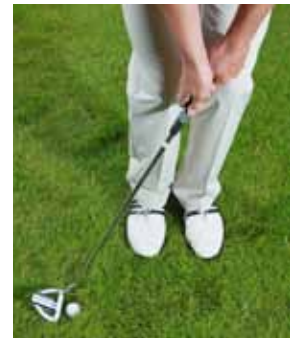
Putter pop shot from a poor lie

Possibly the most unorthodox shot in this feature, the putter pop shot is a ground-breaking discovery. Really poor lies in the rough around the green make it difficult to contact the ball with the face of your wedge with any kind of consistency. This shot actually uses the severity of the lie to your advantage. Rather than using loft to get the ball out, here you use the resistance from the ground to pop the ball upwards with topspin, in theory landing on the fringe and releasing down to the flag. The results from our readers' test prove this shot should genuinely be considered for your game...

RECOIL AFTER IMPACT

The action should feel much like a hammer hitting a nail. Your followthrough will recoil backwards because the energy from the club will be going into the ground. Don't over-accelerate the putter, the weight of the clubhead will do most of the work.

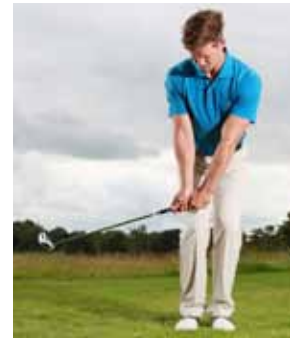
ADDRESS



SET UP TO 'POP' IT

Move the ball six inches outside your right foot with the shaft pointing to your left thigh. Have your feet together and weight in your left side. Feel like you're pointing the putter face down at a 45° angle at the ball, taking the thick grass out of play.

BACKSWING



SWING WITH WRISTS

Try to keep the clubface looking down to the top of the ball in the backswing. This creates a steep angle of attack and the minimal loft on the face will push the ball into the ground and 'pop' it out of the poor lie with plenty of topspin.



{ SHOT 9 }

Hook chip to negate a slope

Humps or shoulders at the sides of a green present a problem. You'll find that the more you allow for the ball to break, the steeper the slope becomes. So you allow for more and more turn until you hit the fringe. Then you have a real problem. But rather than risking putting through the fringe, why not try taking some of the effect of the slope out of play by applying sidespin to the ball? This effectively means the ball will curve less, meaning you can still roll it close to the pin.

CLUB SELECTION

You must choose a club with a low loft to get the ball running and to increase the amount of sidespin you can impart on the ball. The more loft you have, the more difficult both become. A 5 or 6-iron will do this and present enough loft to get the ball out.

HOW TO SHAPE IT

In your address position, aim the clubface at the target and the body slightly right of it. This effectively sets you up for a mini draw shot. In the backswing, the clubface should feel closed to the path of the club, essential for creating draw spin.

CREATE DRAW SPIN

Adopt your usual chipping stance and swing the club with no wrist hinge parallel to your body line, allowing the clubface to gently rotate from open to closed, creating the draw spin. This should see your ball hold its line more on the steep sideslope.

{ SHOT 10 }

Short high pitch off a tight lie

This is undoubtedly one of the scariest shots club golfers face. Hitting a high shot with minimal distance from a tight lie makes it extremely difficult to slide the club

underneath the ball with any kind of confidence because the swing is so slow compared to a full shot.

If this is a shot you wouldn't even contemplate

attempting, TG Pro Gareth Johnston's inventive method here increases the chance of achieving a crisp strike and knocking your ball close to the flag.

SHAFT VERTICAL

At address, the shaft should sit more vertical from both the back and front view. This uses the bounce and also stops the face from rotating closed, helping you to keep the loft on the blade. Striking the ball in the toe also helps prevent the clubhead digging.



ADDRESS



ADDRESS IN THE TOE

Feel that the heel is off the ground at address. Stand slightly closer to the ball to help you achieve this. Address the ball more in the toe end of the club and ensure that you strike down for a downward blow, allowing the ball to roll up the face.

BACKSWING



QUIET WRISTS

Feel that the backswing and throughswing have little or no wrist hinge to reduce the amount of moving parts and improve your timing. Accelerate the clubhead through impact to ensure the ball travels the full distance.

FINISH



LOW AND LEFT FINISH

With the body aligned slightly left of target, swing along your body line cutting across the ball and presenting maximum loft. This also improves your ability to turn the body through impact. This ensures you fully commit to the shot. Your hands should finish low and left.

SHOT 11 DELIBERATELY THINNED DRIVER INTO THE WIND

Many golfers really struggle to keep their ball flight down. This isn't a huge issue in calm conditions or when hitting down-wind but can really hinder your scores on holes playing into the wind.

Unfitted clubs might be the cause but it could just be your swing characteristics. If you've reached the end of your tether, give this shot a try and watch your ball cut through the wind!

HOW IT WORKS

Adopt your normal driver set-up but tee the ball higher than usual. Hover the clubhead so you present the bottom half of the clubface to the ball. The 'roll' on the driver clubface means the loft on the bottom section of the clubface is lower than the top.



SHOT 12 MASTER 50-YARD 'SPLASH' WITH AN 8-IRON

A mishit with a wedge from this distance will fall significantly short but a similar strike with an 8-iron will travel substantially further, giving you a much better chance of saving your score...

HOW TO PLAY IT

Open the face by 10° and move the ball forward of centre. Create plenty of hinge in the backswing to load energy and speed into the clubhead. Accelerate to a full finish but keep the clubface looking back at you to ensure you use and maintain the loft.



ANYONE FOR TENNIS?

Feel like the clubhead approaches the ball from low to high through impact. This will feel like a topspin shot in tennis. Tilt your spine away from the target to help approach the ball shallow and keep your head behind the ball through impact.



SHOT 13 BELLIED WEDGE FROM THE ROUGH COLLAR

When the ball rests against the collar, delivering loft to the ball can be tricky. Instead, try striking the ball with the leading edge. This shot can also be used from a bare or tight lie beside the green.

TREAT IT LIKE A PUTT

Using your putting grip, soften the elbows to raise the sole of the club off the floor. Treat it like a putt with quiet wrists and stay down through the shot. The ball will release from the leading edge quickly with topspin so only make a short swing.



WE PROVE THEY WORK...

TG sought the help of three readers to test whether these unorthodox shots could actually improve your results...

To prove that these shots aren't for show, we placed three TG readers into two short-game scenarios. The three testers were Craig Ferris (handicap 3), Al Jordan

(handicap 12) and Josephina Gregory-Jenkins (handicap 7), all regular players at The Grove. For each shot, they had three attempts using the method they would normally

employ, then three using one of the methods TG Pro Gareth Johnston suggests in this feature. We calculated the average distance the ball finished from the flag.



TEST 1



SHORT-SIDED IN A GREEN-SIDE SWAIL (SHOT 5, P28)

The first shot involves a good, flat lie from the bottom of a run-off area. The flag is cut approximately eight feet from the edge of the green.

TEST 2



GREENSIDE CHIP FROM A POOR LIE (SHOT 8, P30)

The second shot involves the ball in a very poor lie sitting right down in the rough approximately 15 yards downhill to the flag.



CRAIG FERRIS
HANDICAP 3

TEST 1

Bump and run
Average distance from the hole: 19ft
3-wood chip
Average distance: 3ft

"From a good lie here I'd try and bump it into the bank with a pitching wedge. But as soon as I changed to the 3-wood shot, I was immediately comfortable with it and I felt I could hit 10 in a row close really easily, simply because you don't need to focus on the strike. I'll start using it, 100 per cent!"

TEST 2

Chip
Average distance from the hole: 19.66ft
Putter Pop shot
Average distance: 4.33ft

"I'd use my sand wedge here and concentrate on landing it short and allow for the lack of spin. Once I changed to the putter it just popped out perfectly every time, the only thing I had to worry about was controlling the distance. The shot I was playing before was relying on achieving a strike that just wasn't possible."



AL JORDAN
HANDICAP 12

TEST 1

Putt
Average distance from the hole: 7.66ft
3-wood chip
Average distance: 5.33ft

"I'd putt it here. You can't really trust how the ball will react when pitching into the slope. With the 3-wood you're making a shorter swing so you get a bit more control with less effort. The margin for error is greater. I'm a huge fan of this shot and it's definitely something I'll be trying on the golf course from now on."

TEST 2

Chip
Average distance from the hole: 15.66ft
Putter Pop shot
Average distance: 4.66ft

"From a lie this bad your priority is just to get the ball out with a sand wedge and let the contours feed the ball down to the flag. The pop shot is very different and felt strange at first but it's actually quite an easy shot to play. It takes the grass between the clubhead and the ball completely out of the equation."



JOSEPHINA GREGORY-JENKINS
HANDICAP 7

TEST 1

Lob
Average distance from the hole: 7.66ft
3-wood chip
Average distance: 11.66ft

"I would use my lob wedge and try and flop it high and land it on the fringe. The 3-wood shot requires a completely different feel and perhaps a little more practice than a couple of balls! It's not something that's easy to pick up in 10 minutes. But I think under pressure this shot would be a lot safer."

TEST 2

Chip
Average distance from the hole: 20.33ft
Putter Pop shot
Average distance: 6.66ft

"I could barely get the ball out of this lie with my sand wedge! My results speak for themselves really. It sounds stupid, but I can't wait to hit it into the thick rough and give it a go! Short game is all about your imagination and something as simple as this could definitely work with a bit of practice."