

Stop Yips Around the Green

There's a simple drill to help players banish those chipping and pitching yips

By Tom Stickney

What is it? Is it a tight lie or wet ground or simply a sandy lie that causes even the best pitchers and chippers to shake with fear? Hit a few poor ones off these lies and your confidence can be shot, not to mention your scores.

Worse, as time goes on and you continue to hit these shots poorly, you could even develop a case of the yips!

The short-game yips are both mental and physical. They typically start as physical, the result of poor mechanics, improper understanding of the short-game motion or even the incorrect club or bounce used. As your poor shots persist, the problem also becomes mental—a self-fulfilling prophecy if you will. However, I firmly believe that given enough good shots around the green, you can shake the mental demons of the yips. Yes, it will take time, but it

can be done. I can help you understand how the yips happen around the green, and I have a tried-and-true drill that will help you eliminate these yips once and for all.

On the fundamental side, yips around the green generally begin when your shoulders stop rotating through impact and your hands take over. When your hands take over, the rear wrist moves from a bent condition into an arched condition, which causes the chili-dip or skulled shot. So one way to stop the yips is to allow the rear shoulder to rotate through impact, pulling your arms, a bent rear wrist and the clubhead into and through the ball. If the pivot of the rear shoulder stops at any time during the swing, you will be forced to use your hands through impact, which will result in shots that are not hit solidly and inconsistent trajectory control.

In order to re-train your shoulder and rear wrist into doing the correct thing, try my rear-hand drill.



1. Begin by setting up as in the photo. Notice a V formed between the end of the grip and the rear forearm, as well as a bent rear wrist. It's this alignment that *must* be transported through the motion of the shoulders in order to stop the yips for most people.

2. Take the club back as you normally would to hit a chip or pitch from just off the green. You are only trying to fly the ball about 5-10 feet in air in this drill.



3. When you reach impact (as shown), you will notice that the rear shoulder has moved towards the center of your body and is pulling your arm, bent rear wrist, and club into the ball. The pivot of the body is controlling everything trailing behind it, and the last thing to reach the ball will be the clubhead. Notice the V and bent rear wrist conditions have NOT changed from address into impact!

4. If the rear shoulder stops here, you will have no choice but to “slap” your hands at the ball, causing the scooping action of the wrists that is so undesirable around the green.



5. At the finish of your stroke, you will notice that your rear shoulder has continued to rotate and the rear arm has straightened against a *still bent* rear wrist. The V is still intact post-impact, showing you that there was NO unnecessary hand action through impact. Whenever hand action is controlled and the pivot drives the arms, hands and club, you can't help but hit great shots. This is the way to ensure that the ball comes off the blade crisp and solid with plenty of backspin.

Remember: The key to short, greenside shots is to allow your pivot to drive a bent right wrist through impact and into the finish. When you use only your hands, the result is lack of solid contact—and greenside yips.

Experiment with this drill from both good and bad lies with different clubs. If you can replicate the positions demonstrated in the photos above, you will become a short-game wizard.

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