

UNDERSTANDING IMPACT

Making clean contact with the ball before the ground is the key to good ball-striking. *Steve Cottingham* explains how to ensure you hit it flush every time.



THE CONCEPT

What makes a golf ball go up after you have hit it? The answer is a combination of loft, clubhead speed and backspin. Most importantly, much like a drop shot in tennis, you need to make sure that the club is travelling down through the ball, making sure that contact is first with the ball and then the ground. Ideally, the lowest point in the swing would be two or three inches after contact with the ball, which is why the pros take such a big divot after hitting the ball.

THE DRILL

This is not a bunker drill, but rather a demonstration of how you can improve your ball-striking. It's important to practise in the bunker since the 'divot' that you take in the sand will indicate how clean the impact was.

Draw a line in the sand as per the first picture. Place the ball behind the line and concentrate on hitting the ball before you hit the sand. If you make clean contact, the ball will fly despite coming from the sand. The result is that the sand is displaced from the line and beyond it, as in the third image.



STEVE COTTINGHAM has been a member of the PGA of South Africa for 16 years and has taught golf in Germany, Switzerland, Australia, Thailand, the USA and South Africa. He is currently the head professional at the Mount Edgecombe driving range and the director of instruction at Cotswold Downs.

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