

## Teaching Teachers

Improve scoring shots with the **kickstand** drill



By **Jordan Young**,  
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I see a lot of students who've heard too much advice about what to do on scoring shots around the green, like chips and short pitches. It's all good and well-meaning advice – open your hips and shoulders, move the ball back in your stance, aim parallel to the target, open the clubface – but it can become contradictory and too much for the average golfer to handle. Over time, golfers put enough of these ideas together and they start having a hard time finding the ball at the bottom of their swing, leading to an upward angle of attack and shots that are either thin or fat. To correct this, I simplify the process and give them what I call the “kickstand” drill to help them start making crisp contact and restore their confidence around the greens.

PGA Professional **Jordan Young**, the 2013 PGA Player Development Award winner and the 2012 Michigan PGA Teacher of the Year, is the PGA director of instruction at Fox Hills Learning Center in Plymouth, Michigan.

# BAD

## Fancy Footwork

On the left is the impact position I see from 40-50 percent of golfers on scoring shots. Their weight is back, and they're inadvertently hitting the ball on the up-swing. This leads to all sorts of compensations in trying to find the ball at the bottom of their arc. I think the main cause of this problem with average golfers is their attempt to open their feet too much in relation to the target line: Once average golfers twist their feet, they lose perspective on where the ball is in their stance. The ball ends up being farther back in their stance than they intend, and leaning away from the target and flipping at the ball at impact is the usual result. I want to see them in the position shown in the photo on the right, where their feet are actually square to the target and the ball is positioned below their sternum.

# GOOD



## The Kickstand Drill

Once I get a student set up with the ball even with their sternum, I'll put them in what I call the kickstand. This requires them to put the majority of their weight on their lead foot, using just the toes of their trailing foot to keep their balance. Increased pressure on the lead side will ensure the low point is correct more often, giving them a nice, downward strike on the golf ball. In addition, with the pressure at 70 percent on the lead side at address, the hips should naturally open slightly. The vertical axis created will facilitate more hip rotation, and not allow the lead knee to collapse. As a result, this controls the low point of the arc with crisp, consistent shots while avoiding "scoops." Once they hit two or three shots from the kickstand position, they usually have an "A-ha!" moment with the proper feel for the shot, and I have them ease their trailing foot back onto the ground.

## Kicking Into Higher Gear

You see great things when golfers practice the kickstand drill and start hitting crisp chips and pitches. You see the speed of their swing increase on these scoring shots, which leads to better contact, spin and control. A lot of average golfers swing too slowly and follow through too far, trying to help the ball into the air. When they realize how to control the low point and angle of attack, good things happen and their anxiety goes down. It's very satisfying as a teacher to put a smile on someone's face, or to have them come in from a round saying, "I've never chipped it that well before!" The kickstand drill is also something they can practice and even use on the course to eliminate miss-hits on tight lies. It can become a foundation for pitching and chipping, and be diverse in so many more ways in future lessons. ■

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