
Tip of the week: How to shape your pitch shots

June 23, 2025

We'd all love it if the hole was always cut right in the center of the green. With plenty of room on either side to miss, our scoring averages would likely plummet. As we all know, however, a hole location right in the center of the green is quite rare. Oftentimes, the hole is cut closer to one side of the green or the other, tucked behind bunkers or water hazards. Shaping your pitch shots to access tucked pins is a high-level skill to master, but the technique is actually quite simple. In order to get started learning the skill, all you need to do is manipulate a few things in your setup and swing to get the ball working with draw or cut spin. "It's the sort of thing they do on Tour to access pins" says GOLF Top 100 Teacher Jonathan Yarwood.

Cut pitch

Let's start with a pitch that moves from left to right (for a right-handed golfer). At address, you want to open the face of the club and then open your stance a bit as well. Get the handle a little closer to your lead leg and take the club a bit outside during the takeaway. On the downswing, focus on spinning your body and pulling the handle of the club toward your lead pocket all while keeping the face of the club as open as you can. "Effectively you're pulling the path left and keeping the face open," Yarwood says. "That thing comes out left to right in the air, hits the green and checks right."

Draw pitch

A draw pitch is great for taking a bit of spin off your pitch shot, especially when you've got a false front protecting the green. To start, take a little more club than you normally would and then focus on taking a longer and wider backswing. On the downswing, roll the toe of the club and use a slow rhythm as you come through impact. "That negates [and] reduces some of the backspin," Yarwood says. Pros hit these shots every week as they compete on Tour — and if you practice them a bit, you can add them to your arsenal as well.