

Out of a Divot

THIS CAN BE A cruel game. Have you ever hit a fairway-splitting drive only to walk 240 metres down the fairway and find your ball sitting on a sandfilled divot. Even more soul-destroying is the great drive that comes to rest in a non-sandfilled divot. Your great drive and birdie chance becomes a nightmare as you struggle to secure a regulation par.

Remember the late Payne Stewart, making a run at the 1998 US Open at The Olympic Club. Stewart hit a great drive on the 12th in the final round. His ball stopped on a sand-filled divot. Stewart's second was wayward, he bogeyed the hole and ended up losing to Lee Janzen by a shot.

Unfortunately most amateurs are still cursing their luck when it comes to playing their next shot.

However sandfilled divots shouldn't hold any fears for average players. With a few minor adjustments and some mental fortitude you can minimise damage and not let a little luck ruin your round. Remember it is bad luck but you can minimise the damage.

BY MARK GIBSON

ONE OF GOLF MAGAZINE'S TOP 50 TEACHERS



STEP 1:

You're looking to minimise damage so look for the soft option. A bail-out area short or to one side of the green. The toughest part about playing out of a divot is ensuring quality of impact. I assume that I'll be able to bargain on between 80-100 percent of full impact. This means allowing for error. For a divot without sand take time to assess the depth and height of the lip. You may need to take one more club to ensure you get the ball up out of the divot and accept that you may come up 10 metres short.

STEP 2:

Put the ball back a little in your stance. Again we are trying to maximise quality of contact. For a divot which is filled with sand take your normal club. If the divot is only partly filled or it's original owner wasn't carrying a sandbucket take a normal club but expect a lower ball flight.

STEP 3:

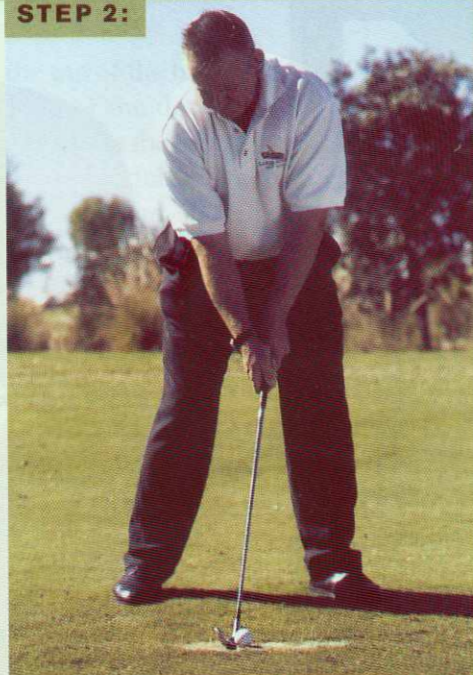
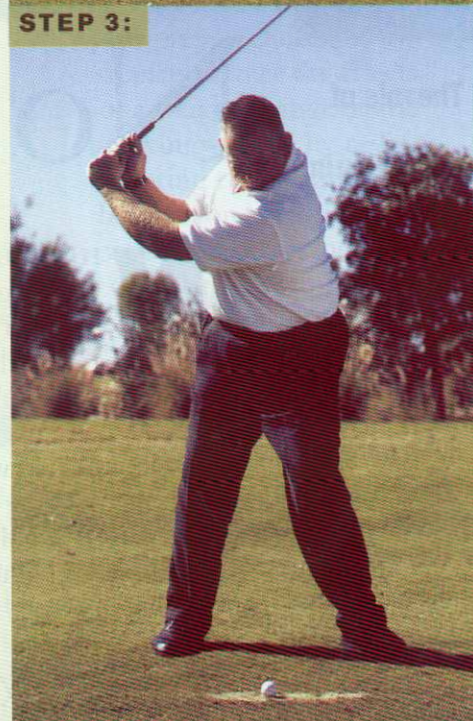
There is less weight shift on the backswing. I'd estimate 55-45, rather than the 70-30 shift which you would take on the normal back swing. This causes the club to go back steeper.

STEP 4:

A strong body rotation from this position will also cause the angle of attack on the ball to be steeper. This should guarantee solid impact.

STEP 5:

Finally don't forget to fill or re-fill the divot so the next person doesn't come across the same problems.

STEP 2:**STEP 3:**

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