

Splash school

The greenside bunker shot can make or break your round so a committed and technically sound approach is crucial. Follow these seven tips to build your confidence and escape the sand with ease



Set up

The most important component in a successful splash shot is a good address position that allows you room to swing freely and get the ball airborne quickly. Work through these basic elements and build the perfect set up.

1 Open face

Before you do anything else you need to open the face of your wedge. Turn the grip so you can see the grooves on the clubface and THEN take hold of the club. Increasing the loft in this way allows you to be more aggressive, safe in the knowledge that the ball will fly higher not further.

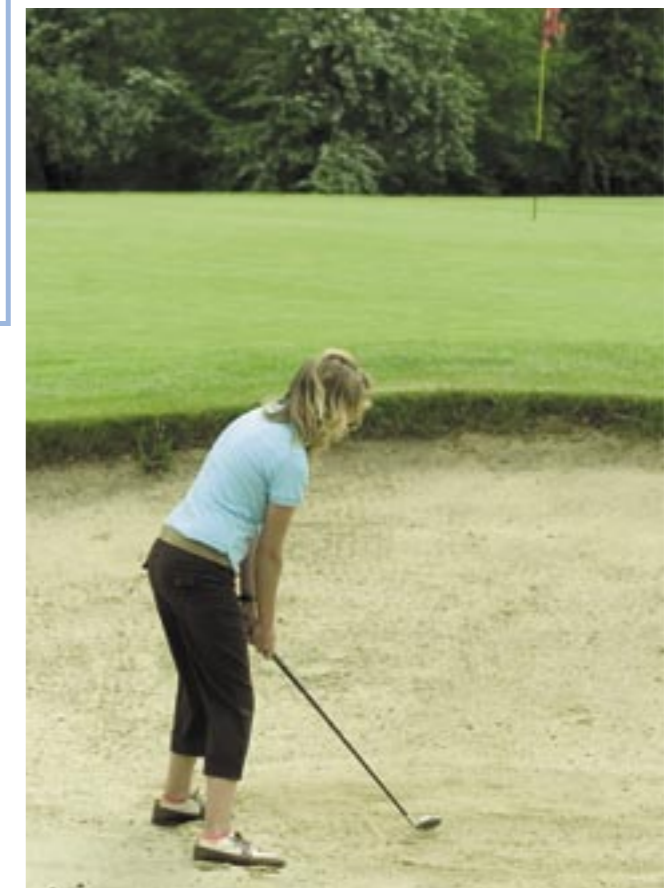
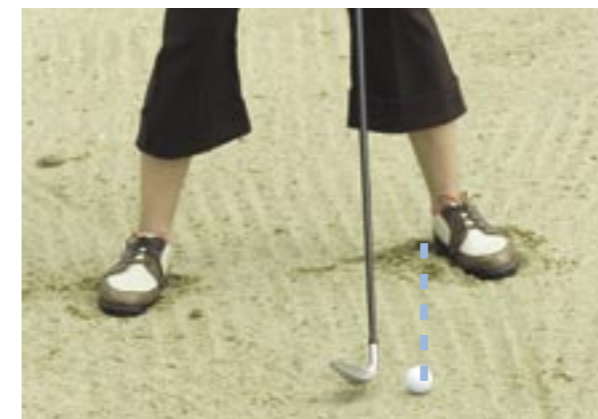


2 Open stance

Your feet and shoulders should aim to the left of the flag to allow your upper body to release powerfully through the sand. It is important to remember that the clubface should still point directly at the target.

3 Ball position

Push the ball forwards in your stance so it is in line with your left heel. With the ball further forward in your stance a shallow angle of attack should create the ideal long, shallow divot.





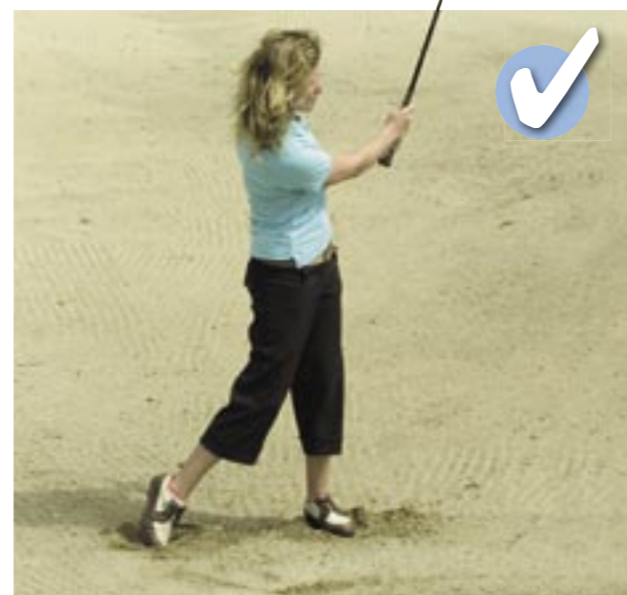
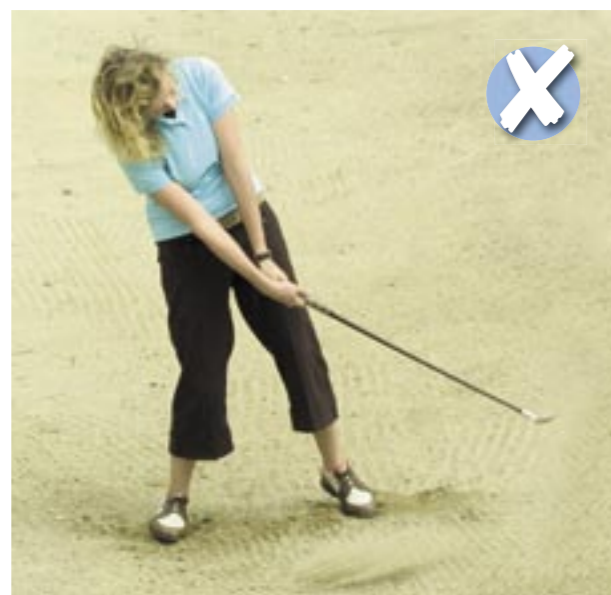
4 Weighty matters
 Once you have established a firm base in the sand your lower body should remain fairly passive. At address you need to place slightly more weight on your right foot than your left. This will help you catch the sand before the ball and pop it softly into the air.



6 Line 'em up
 This simple "line drill" will help train your mind and body to take the perfect amount of sand. Draw a line in the sand square to the target and place some balls along it a few inches apart. Hit each ball and concentrate on taking an even amount of sand either side of the line. This will help you trust the idea of hitting a couple of inches behind the ball. When you get to the course, visualise this line and a good swing will splash the ball out on a cushion of sand.



5 The need for speed
 Amateurs often make the mistake of decelerating during the downswing. This is often due to a lack of confidence – they fear the result of an aggressive splash shot. But it is vitally important to commit to the stroke as you need clubhead speed to escape the sand safely. To build your confidence visualise your finish position before you play. Concentrate on accelerating your hands into a full follow-through and you will avoid decelerating during the shot.



7 Fried egg drill
 This idea is also designed to help you take the right amount of sand. Draw a circle around a ball as shown. Don't worry about the ball but concentrate on hitting all the sand in the circle onto the green. The ball will emerge with the sand, landing softly on the putting surface.



Meet the expert

Former international Katie Dawkins is a PGA teaching professional at Hamptworth G&CC near the New Forest. She runs Wiltshire girls' coaching and The Academy at the club, which caters for all standards of player.