

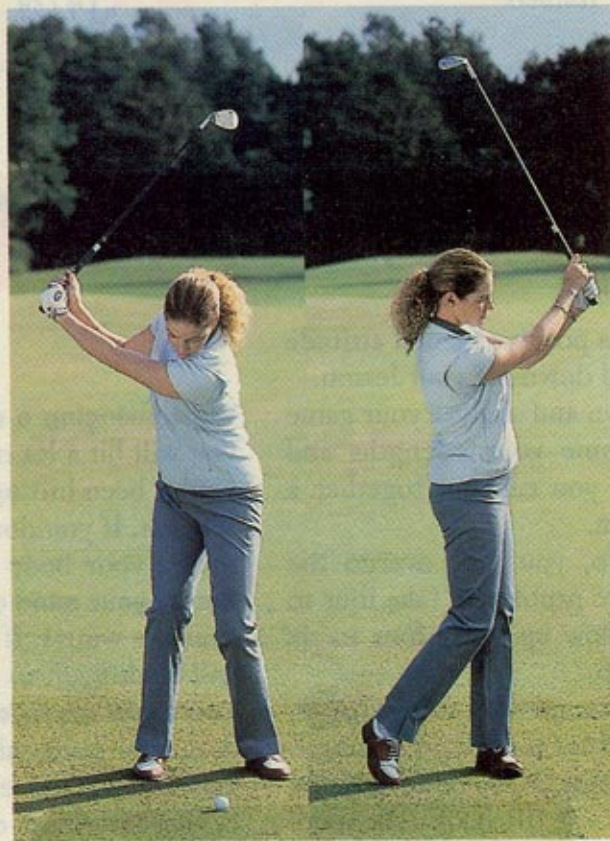
Spring Your Short Game

ACCORDING TO A RECENT GOLFOonline poll (www.golffonline.com), the short game is the toughest part of the game to pick up again in the spring. Of the nearly 1,000 respondents, almost half said greenside shots were the slowest to come around. With that in mind, the two drills here—one on chipping, one on pitching—from **Karen Palacios**, instructor with the Jim McLean Golf School in Miami, Florida, will help you recapture your touch around the greens.



Chipping

▲ Many amateurs struggle to make solid contact on chip shots. To train yourself to hit crisp chips, lay a club on the ground a few inches behind your right foot (as shown), and practice chipping without hitting the club. Play the ball off your right instep, set about 70 percent of your weight on your front foot, and lean the shaft toward the target. These positions will set up a descending blow at impact, which is the key to solid chipping.



Pitching

◀ Effective pitching is all about controlling distance, which requires a keen sense of rhythm. Here's a great rhythm drill: Set up targets at three distances—say, 20, 40, and 60 yards—and practice pitching to them with your sand wedge. Take a square stance, center the ball, and focus on swinging your arms back and through the same length. For example, if you swing your left arm to 10 o'clock on the backswing, swing your right arm to 2 o'clock on the follow-through (see photos). Making your backswing and follow-through equal in length will foster a smooth, even tempo.

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