



### Against the Collar

While watching golf tournaments on television, you may have heard announcers say that the players with the best short games show the most imagination around the greens. I personally believe this to be very true. Modern golf courses have so many obstacles around the green that make the hole difficult that conventional shot-making is not always the best option. In this particular case, the obstacle is not a deep bunker or severely sloped ridge, but is simply the “collar” which is simply a transition from a shorter cut of grass to a longer cut. My ball has come to rest between the fringe and the rough, but this will also apply to a ball between the green and the fringe.



### The Difficulty of this Shot

It is rather surprising how difficult this shot can be considering the fact that I have not missed the green by more than 3 feet and I only have about 30 feet to the hole. However, the issue here does not rest in how far I am from the hole, but the difficulty I will have in making solid contact between my club and the ball. When the ball is up against the collar, it means that the ball is actually sitting on a level of grass that is below the level of the grass behind the ball, making a conventional shot very difficult. If I am to try to hit a regular chip shot, it is difficult to get the wedge down through the rough and make clean contact with the ball. Because there is a great chance that a lot of grass will get between the ball and the club, there is no way to properly judge how hard to swing ([See Right](#)). This often results in a chunked or heavy shot and the ball traveling a very short distance.



The same difficulty arises when I try to use a putter. Once again, a large amount of grass is in the way and I cannot make solid contact ([See Left](#)). If I do swing the putter into the grass, it is likely that the square and rigid face will get caught in the rough and the clubface will also twist while it slows down, creating a short and off-line putt.

### The Creative Solution

Now that I have told you what not to do, I am going to give you a creative solution to the problem. It is difficult to chip with a wedge, because you cannot swing the club-head



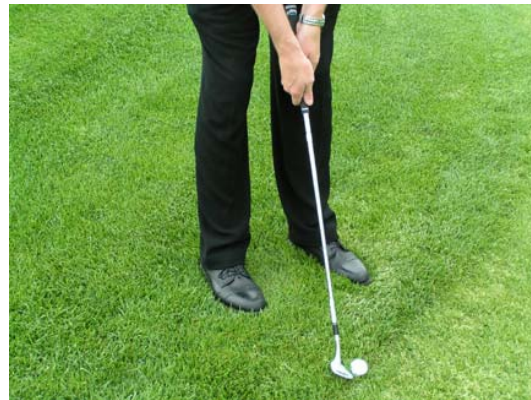
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through the longer grass and make contact with the ball on the shorter grass with any consistency. It is tough to putt the ball because the square putter face does not travel through the grass easily causing it to slow down and twist uncontrollably. So, if you cannot putt with your putter and you cannot chip with your wedge, then try putting with your wedge! Let me explain.

Your sand wedge has some very helpful characteristics that allow this shot to be possible. First, it has a slightly rounded and smooth leading edge that will glide through the top of the long grass without getting caught or twisted in the process. Secondly, the club is very similar in length to the length of a putter, making it rather comfortable to be making a short putting stroke with. Thirdly, your miss-hits with this shot will tend to be rather consistent with those that are struck perfectly.

### The Set-up and Execution

To set up for this shot, you want to grip lower on the handle of your sand wedge, effectively making the club shorter so you have more control and can stand over the ball more, like when hitting a putt. I also like to place the ball a little towards the back of my stance to promote a descending motion at the ball, therefore helping to avoid the long grass behind the ball ([See Right](#)).



The most important part of the set-up for this shot is how high you position the leading edge of your sand wedge. I like to position it so that the leading edge is in line with the middle or the equator of the ball. As you can see, the club itself is now allowed to hover above the long grass and essentially take it out of play ([See Left](#)).

Now all you have to do is make a normal putting stroke. Take the club back slowly and accelerate through the ball and to the target. The ideal stroke will make contact with the center of the ball, but a miss-hit either slightly high or low of the equator will also produce solid results.



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### **Practice**

I would encourage you to set up 5 shots in this situation and try them with all different options, the chip, the putt, and the putted wedge. You will notice consistency that really helps your comfort and confidence when you putt with the sand wedge. Remember, being creative on the golf course not only makes the game more fun, it can really improve your scores!

**For any lesson enquiries, please contact the pro-shop at 933-4721!**