When I was in my first two years of taking golf more seriously my lessons were on the full swing. I figured I could work on the short game and putting on my own, I just considered chipping an abbreviated version of the full swing!

I never asked my pro for a lesson on chipping. Since we were playing fairly easy munis this never seemed to be an issue, until I stared playing some other more challenging courses that had thicker rough around the greens. This was my first setback that brought the progress to lower scores I’d been enjoying to a screeching halt! Suddenly it was rare to break 90 again. I still didn’t go for a chipping lesson but instead I just read more and more short game articles in golf magazines.

This was my first Ah Ha moment – I realized that fixing my own game by reading articles was not getting me anywhere. I should note that this was in the early eighties, there was no YouTube then. Add to that I was in my early twenties and not thinking as rationally as I would later on!

Through trial and error, I figured out some chipping fundamentals but not enough of them. Always lacking in short-game confidence I developed anxiety around chipping and this spilled over into the rest of my game. There’s more pressure to hit greens to avoid having to chip.

As this was coming to a head my daughters were born, I began my teaching career, and there was less time for golf. As I played less the short game problems seemed to become less of a concern but they were still there, lurking!

Fast forward to the late nineties when I started playing more again and developed a serious case of chipping yips. Nothing helped, not lessons or YouTube. By about 2005, I knew the fundamentals, could chip decently when practicing, but couldn’t execute on the course. My chipping anxiety was ruining my enjoyment of the game.

I was able to avoid dealing with this again when I began having back problems that lasted more than ten years. During this time, I played less and was more concerned about just being able to get out on the course. Eventually the right physio treatments and exercises allowed me to start playing more regularly by 2018. As well I’ve likely reached the age where my back has started to fuse naturally and it seems that there are fewer meltdowns and I can recover more quickly from them.

The Fix

There are many good YouTube channels that have quality videos on chipping, however watching someone else chip is nowhere near as good as feeling the right techniques yourself. Its easy now to video yourself and that’s when I saw it.

I wasn’t accelerating through the impact zone enough and only my upper body was turning.

I took too long a backswing and decelerated at the ball.

I chest and my arms moved independently to each other.

Sure, a golf buddies might tell you that but I needed to see it for myself.