

HOW TO RETRIEVE A BALL FROM A GOPHER HOLE

1 Determine whether your ball is in a gopher hole.

If you were able to see your ball land and you have checked that area carefully, look for a gopher hole. A gopher hole will be a well-groomed hole in the ground approximately two to three inches in diameter. There may be a cluster of gopher holes, especially if you are in the rough near the edge of the woods.

2 Attempt to make visual contact with the ball.

Do not put your hand down the hole. You do not know what is down there.

3 If you see the ball, use your longest club to hook the ball and drag it toward the top of the hole.

Use your two or three iron, a long club with a relatively small club head. A ball retriever, designed for water hazards, may also work.

4 Pick up the ball with your other hand as it comes close to the top of the hole.

5 Leave the area quickly.

The animal you have disturbed may be angered by your invasion. While most animals are more afraid of you than you are of them, caution is always the best policy.

Be Aware

- A ball in the depths of a gopher hole is nearly impossible to see. Be sure to keep your eye on the ball if there are gopher holes on the course. Use at least two points of reference to mark where your ball lands.
- The gopher's burrow system may be linear or highly branched. A single burrow system may be up to 200 yards long. Underground tunnels are two to three inches in diameter and usually are 6 to 12 inches below the ground, but they may be more than six feet deep. You may need to use a flashlight to see within the complex maze.
- Gophers have menacing upper and lower teeth that are always exposed. They also have strong forepaws with large claws. If you are bitten or clawed, seek medical attention immediately. Although gophers are normally shy, they will bite.

The Rules

Once you identify your ball, you must advise your fellow players that you will be lifting it. You can pick up your ball without a penalty and drop it at the nearest point of relief from where it lies. If you are not in a hazard, the nearest point of relief is one club length from the nearest location no closer to the hole that allows you to take your normal stance and swing. If you are in a hazard, you cannot remove the ball without taking a penalty stroke.



If the ball is lost in the gopher hole, you may replace it without penalty. This is an exception to the general rule that a lost ball will cost you a stroke. The main question your opponents will have is whether there is reasonable evidence that your ball disappeared into a gopher hole rather than that the ball was lost elsewhere.

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