

Scenario

You are 20 feet off the green and you thinking about maybe trying your most famous bump and run shot. Then you see that there is something on the fringe that may stop or redirect your shot. Can you remove the stuff on the fringe? This is when it is good to know your rules so you can best determine your options. The answer is complex so we will go over it.

Under rule 15.1a A player is allowed to remove loose impediments anywhere on or off the course and may do so in any way (such as by using a hand or foot or a club or other equipment). These natural and artificial objects are not treated as part of the challenge of the course and a player is normally allowed to remove them when they interfere with play. The player must be careful in moving the loose impediment near her ball off the putting green, because there will be a penalty if moving them causes the ball to move. (

Two exceptions

Exception 1. Removing loose impediments where a ball must be replaced
A player must not deliberately remove loose impediments that, if moved when the ball was at rest, would have been likely to have caused the ball to move. (one stroke penalty)

Exception 2 Restrictions on Deliberately Removing Loose Impediments to affect ball in motion.

Definition of loose impediment from the rule book.

Any unattached natural objects such as:

Stones, loose grass, leaves, branches sticks

Dead animals and animal waste

Worms, Insects etc.

Clumps of compacted soil(including aeration plugs)

Displaced divot that not in a divot hole (per decision 23,13)

Objects that are NOT loose impediment

Attached and growing

Solidly imbedded in the ground (that cannot be picked out easily)

Or sticking to the ball

Pressing down removing or repositioning a divot in a divot hole is treated as part of the ground

Special cases:

Sand and soil are **NOT** loose impediments

Dew, Frost, and water are **NOT** loose impediments

Snow and Natural Ice (other than frost) are either loose impediments or, when on the ground, temporary water, at the players option.

Spider webs are loose impediments even though they are attached to an object.

Remember the rules are different when the ball is on the green.