

## THE “EASY-OUT” SAND SHOT

The sand bunker shot is, or should be, one of the easiest shots in golf. Yet more average golfers seem uncomfortable or even fear this shot than those who don't. For the most part, the most common error for players is making the shot much more complicated than necessary. Many open their stance and clubface too much, some cock their wrists excessively, and others try to create some swing path completely different from their normal swing. This normally leads to difficulty bottoming out the arc of their swing in the right place and often results in “fat” shots left in the bunker and/or bladed shots “airmailing” the green.

If this sounds like you, the best thing to do is simplify your approach to the shot so you can consistently get the ball on the green and eventually nearer the hole. Give this swing a try using a sand wedge with 54 to 60 degrees of loft:

1. Rather than severely opening your stance and clubface, aim very slightly left of your target line and open the clubface only a few degrees.
2. Work your feet into the sand for stability, and widen your stance to approximately the width of your shoulders.
3. Increase the flex in your knees.
4. Pick out a spot 2” or so behind the ball, and address that point in the sand with your club. Remember, you're not hitting the golf ball you're displacing about 6” of sand below the level of the ball.
5. Position your hands at address even with, not ahead of the spot you pick in the sand, so it will encourage a swing utilizing the bounce on your sand wedge.
6. Rather than a full swing, take a half back swing and follow through with the grip of the club reaching hip height on the back swing and follow through. As you swing rotate your shoulders back and through, and try to position your elbows level with the ground at hip height on both sides of the swing with a moderate amount of wrist cock.
7. Always accelerate smoothly through the sand and maintain a nice tempo

What you'll find using this technique is that this shot is more similar to a pitch shot than a full swing - the only difference being you're striking the sand rather than the ball first.