

The Dreaded Bunker Shot

Posted by [golfscene](#) on Sunday, May 31, 2009 · [Leave a Comment](#)

How do I hit it higher out of the bunker? How do I get it out period? This is probably the most common question I get asked other than, how do I get backspin on a ball?

The very best thing a student can give themselves when practicing is to get a visual. On the range we lay clubs and gadgets down all over the ground to figure out our alignment, but we don't do anything in the bunker. Please refer to diagram at right on setting up properly.

- ☑ Line #1 represents your toe line
- ☑ Line #2 represents the area behind the ball where you should try and make contact with the sand
- ☑ Line #3 equals the target.

Draw these lines in the sand with your club or the rake. Of course we know we're not suppose to ground the club when in the bunker, but hit some shots with your club grounded, know where you need to make contact with the sand, return to that starting point and get a feel for the sand, then work your way up to not grounding your club hitting shots.



The first thing you will notice is that you can see and analyze your result, did you hit behind the line, on the line or in front of the line? You don't even need a ball to do this drill.

One of the secrets to success in hitting a higher bunker shot is to get the club slightly open, not a huge amount and you MUST take the club very abrupt /vertical in the backswing.

Another key that works for many people, depending on the amount of practice you put into it, is to make sure the club starts to the outside on the way up making a bit of a loop in the backswing (visualize Fred Couples or Jim Furyk's backswing) and then drop the club inside across the golf ball, this will help in getting under the ball without beginning with that wide open clubface at address.

There are two determining factors that players need to remember when hitting bunkers shots, how fast are you going to swing and how much sand are you going to take? But, the single most important thing to remember is one word, 'Accelerate'! You have to keep the club moving. The opposite of acceleration is deceleration, this is why most players dump the ball in front of themselves. So keep that club accelerating, determine just how much sand you want to take, and then execute to the best of your ability.

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Jason is always willing to take on new students and is currently working on building his reputation as a top Canadian Instructor. He is currently working with players on the Nationwide and Canadian Tours. Contact: jhelman@clublink.ca or 905-925-0129

