

Ballantrae lesson #7 – Sand play

When the average amateur golfer lands in a greenside sand bunker, panic typically sets in!! Little do they know that this is actually one of the easiest shots in golf to play effectively and here is why - You do not have to hit the ball – only the sand behind the ball. You will learn to play this shot by striking the sand approximately 2 inches behind the ball using a sand wedge, which has a blunt sole designed to bounce rather than dig. Opening the face of your sand wedge exposes that blunt bottom even more and really helps you to “explode” the shot out of the bunker. You are literally hitting far enough behind the ball to get a cushion of sand between the striking surface of the club and the ball itself. Removal of this sand when swinging through the shot puts a tremendous amount of backspin on the ball which helps the player stop the ball quickly on the green. With this in mind here are some steps to use in learning to play this shot:

- Grip – use your regular full shot grip but grip the sand wedge with the clubface open
- Stance – stand with your stance open to the target, which means your body is facing more to the left than normal (right-handers)
- Aim – the open club face should be aiming at the target
- Ball position – critical step – play the ball forward opposite the left heel and place the majority of weight to the left foot.



- Stroke – Use your regular swing to hit this shot, but adjust the length of the backswing to fit the need. For shots that are relatively close to the hole from a shallow greenside bunker, use only a half length backswing. The longer the shot, the longer the backswing but in all cases strike the sand about 2 inches behind the ball and FOLLOW THROUGH! Many golfers fail when trying this shot because they “hit and quit”! Always swing through to a good full finish.



- Let's review the keys to this shot: clubface gripped open, ball forward opposite the left heel, hit two inches behind the ball and follow through!!