

Throw Some Sand

And escape the bunker

By Dale Abraham, PGA, Photos by Ryan Noll



One of the reasons so many folks struggle from the sand is that they don't understand the importance of an open face at impact. This is especially critical around the greens and over deep-faced bunker edges where you need the ball to pop up in a hurry. By keeping the face open through impact, you'll also make things easier, mainly because an open face adds a lot of bounce to the bottom of your wedge, thus preventing you from digging too deep into the sand.

But how are you supposed to do that? The solution is simple. Instead of concentrating so much on where you are at impact, think more of the steps you need to take to get to the impact position with an open face. This means paying specific attention to the clubface angle at the top of your swing. Ideally, an open face at the top of your swing is positioned face down to the ground at the top of your swing. This is where my drill comes into play. Head over to the practice bunker and follow these steps. First, rake up a small pile of sand onto the face of the wedge. Then, with that sand on the face, make a backswing and try to throw the sand over your left shoulder. Keep trying until you can get the bulk of the sand to fling out in front of you as I'm doing here. Once you get a knack for it, you'll automatically know what it feels like to have an opened clubface at the top of your swing. And from there, swing as you normally would in the bunker, hitting the sand an inch or so behind the ball.

With this simple and fun drill, you'll ingrain an open-faced bunker shot into your bunker game, and in no time, you'll start hitting higher bunker shots.

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