

THE SLICE

As golfers, our main goal is to become more consistent. Of course, we all want to hit the ball further but further is not better if we cannot make consistent contact and send the ball down the middle of the fairway. Discussing the keys to increased distance is important but if you cannot control the direction the ball travels it is conceivable that the longer you hit the ball the further off line it will go.

In a previous article we discussed eliminating the reverse pivot by ensuring your body rotates rather than moves laterally into the backswing. As a result your weight transfers to your back foot rather than your front foot. Ensuring your body rotates properly gives you a much better chance to make consistent contact with each shot and will send the ball further and straighter than it did before.

Most golfers tend to hit the ball with a slice! A slice is the movement on the ball from left to right (this applies to right handed golfers...right to left movement on the ball for left handed golfers). To assist you in correcting this ball movement you must first understand the path the club generally takes to create this flight.

There are three paths the club will take. The first is an outside to in, then an inside to out and then finally a down the line club path. Ultimately as golfers, we are attempting to swing the club down the line. By doing so the ball will start towards your target and if your clubface is square at impact the ball will travel straight down the middle of the fairway or to the green.

Most golfers tend to swing outside to in and or as often referred to, over the top. By doing so will start the ball left of target and if the clubface is open (not square) to the path the club is taking the ball will spin right or slice (this applies to right handed golfers, the opposite is true for left handed golfers).

There are many reasons for golfers to hit a slice as the golf swing is made up of many different sequential moves and positions. In this article I will focus on the most common fault that golfers make who slice the ball. This fault is called **casting**.

Casting is the break down of the 90 degree angle between the left arm and the shaft of the club too soon in the downswing. This is generally caused by the right hand (for right handed golfers) being too tight on the club therefore pushing the club towards the ball in the downswing rather than pulling the handle down towards the ball.

First of all we need to discuss grip pressure. Most golfers tend to hold the golf club too tight. If you start with your hands tight on the handle of the club then in most cases you will not create the proper hinge in the backswing. More importantly, too tight a grip will cause a casting motion and as a result the clubface will not be square at impact and the ball will ultimately slice and distance will be affected.

The proper grip pressure is one that will not allow the club to spin in your hands but could easily be pulled out. Imagine holding a baby bird when trying to understand proper grip pressure. You want hold the bird tight enough that it does not get away but relaxed enough that you do not squeeze the life out of it. This grip pressure must be maintained throughout the swing.

The next step is to understand what the club head does in the back swing and down swing. Understanding this should assist you in eliminating the casting motion.

As we take the club to the top of our back swing, we are attempting to move the club head away from the ball. Where most golfers make their mistake is that at the start of the down swing they attempt to move that club head back too the ball by pushing with the right hand (for right handed golfers), therefore causing a casting motion.

At the start of the downswing we want to pull the butt end of the club down towards the ball therefore lagging the club head behind. It is this concept that most golfers do not understand and as a result will cause a casting motion.

If you have a relaxed grip pressure and swing to your full finish position then the club travels down the line better (not over the top) and will send the ball towards your target with less slice.