

How To Break80™ “Bunker DVD” Outline for Practicing

From Bobby Eldridge:

Thanks for getting the “The Bunker DVD”. If you practice the techniques that you learned in the DVD you’ll soon see improvement in your bunker game. The purpose for this reminder outline is to give you something to reference when you go to the practice facility. It will be easy for you to print this out, bring it with you to the range, and practice various aspects of the bunker shot.

Introduction

This is not only my favorite place to be for practicing on my own game, but it’s also one of my favorite things to do is to teach you how to improve your bunker game. The reason that the bunker shot is so difficult is because if you hit the golf ball first, you usually have hit a poor golf shot. You need to put a layer of sand between the club face and the golf ball.

Rules

The rules of golf say that when you are in the bunker, you are in a hazard.

The only difference between being in here and being in the water is it’s a penalty to take the ball out of water. When you are in the bunker it’s not a penalty to be in here; however, you are not allowed to do two things.

- Number one, you’re not allowed to ground the golf club and/or you’re not allowed to sole the golf club until impact with the sand/golf ball.
- Number two, you’re not allowed to test the sand. You’re not allowed to walk in and scrape your feet around to test how firm or soft the sand is.
- You are allowed to get a good grip with your feet but no testing is allowed.

The Equipment

When buying a sand wedge it is important to keep a couple things in mind.

- Make sure the wedge has no more than 8° of bounce on the bottom of the club.
- More than 8° could cause the club to bounce off the sand easier.
- Make sure the wedge has 55° of loft or more.
- The more loft on the wedge, the easier it will be to get the golf ball in the air.
- If you play golf in Florida, then you can own a sand wedge with more bounce.
- If you play golf in Arizona, where there is harder ground, it doesn’t matter where you play your golf if you play in soft sand, you can use a little bit bigger bounce. If you play where the sand is firm, you don’t need as much bounce.
- If you try to hit your bunker shot with a pitching wedge and you clear the lip, then the ball will run forever versus a sand wedge. So if you have a 56 degree sand wedge, that’s enough loft to get the golf ball up and over the lip.
- If you have the correct bounce this is what will help the golf club glide through the sand.

Address

To hit a good bunker shot, it is extremely important that you are set up correctly. We're going to teach you to address the ball with the majority of your weight on your left foot, the club across from your belt buckle, and not to dig your feet into the sand. The following set-up positions are for all three distances.

- The first set-up position is that the golf ball has to be across from the inside of your left heel. It has to be forward in your stance.
- The next position is that the knees should be slightly flexed. Your feet should be shoulder width apart. Don't dig your feet into the sand.
- You're going to want to bend at the hips as though you were hitting a pitch shot over a bunker. You don't want to bend any more or any less.
- You should have seventy percent of your weight on your left foot. The handle of the club should be across from your belt buckle at this position. You're not allowed to ground your golf club.
- Make sure you can keep your chin up.

Now here are a couple of mistakes that you'll make when you address the golf ball.

- Sometimes you will find the golf ball in the back of the stance or in the middle of your stance. The golf club is not going to be able to swing steep enough to catch enough sand under the ball. So make sure that the golf ball is across from your left heel.
- The handle must stay across from the middle of your body. Don't get it out in front of you.
- The handle of the club needs to be across from your belt buckle.
- The golf ball should be directly across from your left heel.
- And finally, your weight needs to be on your left side.

Alignment

Alignment in the bunker should be exactly the same as any other golf shot. Your feet, knees, hips, and shoulders should be aligned parallel left of the target.

- Aim plays a very important role in the bunker.
- After you address the golf ball, there are two parallel lines that you should be aware of. The first line is the line where the golf ball travels towards your target.
- The second line is your feet, knees, hips, and shoulders. They should be parallel to the first line.
- Take one look down to make sure that you're parallel and that your golf ball is across from your left heel.
- Aim straight towards your target line every time.

Backswing

Because you're using a golf club with a lot of loft and you're going to hit the sand first in the downswing you need to take a full golf swing at the ball. This will provide enough force to propel the club out of the sand. We're going to teach you a very steep backswing. In this setup, seventy percent of your weight is on your left leg. You need to keep your weight on your left leg during the backswing.

- The right shoulder will have more of a tilt rather than a turning motion in the backswing.
- Start the golf club back with your arms and hands in one piece.
- Swing your arms up and down along your body line.
- Your hands should swing past your shoulder line at the top of the backswing.
- At address, you should be bent over at the hips and your knees are slightly flexed. During the backswing, neither one of these two positions should ever change.
- Your left arm is long; your right elbow will start to fold as the golf club passes 9 o'clock.
- Make sure this whole time that your weight stays on your left side but you want the golf swing up in the air.
- Full swing as though you were using a driver.
- The right elbow will bend after 9 o'clock ensuring the arms go all the way up.
- If you only go half way back you won't have any angle to swing the golf club into the ground.
- When swinging the club up, don't turn in the backswing. As you start back if the right shoulder turns away, the golf club will get too much inside and you'll be too shallow and wind up blading it or sculling it over the green.
- Don't be afraid to take the golf club all the way back.
- The bunker swing is a full arm swing to the top of the backswing. The shoulders don't turn, they tilt slightly.

Downswing

As you begin the downswing, the right arm unhinges and the right shoulder should follow. The arms and hands swing the golf club back down on the same path in the downswing. The right shoulder starts to turn as the club head contacts the sand.

- First begin to straighten the right arm.
- Don't turn the right shoulder while swinging the golf club down.
- Keep the right shoulder back until the club head nears impact.
- Both arms are long and the right shoulder is still back.
- The left hip will begin to turn out of the way.
- At the top of the backswing coming down the first thing to do is straighten the right arm as early as possible for clubhead speed.

- The most common mistake is to turn the right shoulder first.
- Keep your weight on the left side; don't shift to the middle or the right.
- Be sure to turn through in the downswing.

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Follow Through

At this point, all of your weight is on your left side. Your belt buckle is pointing at the target and you are standing tall. When you start your downswing, it is very important that you have the club head swinging almost as fast as you can and the reason why is because you're going to swing the golf club on what's called a steep angle. And what that means is that the club is going to swing from up to down. Now, it's going to run into the sand, and when it does, you need a little bit of club head speed. So make sure that when you swing the golf club up and as you start down, that you give it a really good sling so it makes it through the bunker; as it comes down it keeps swinging through the bunker.

- Let the right heel come up.
- It's a combination of quick hand speed. The Right heel makes the golf club come through the sand.
- The belt buckle turns through and points towards the target.
- The two most common mistakes are chipping out and trying to control how far the ball travels with the swing speed.
- Being on your left side, with the club face open, make a full arm swing. From here, give the bunker a good old blast at the bottom and turn through. The golf ball will come out. You won't knock it over the green.
- Make sure that in your follow-through, you're swinging all the way up to the finish. Don't slow it down. Don't try to stop it.
- As the club swings down, get your left side out of the way. Get the right heel up in the air so that the golf club can continue to swing up to its finish. Let it all go through.
- After you hit the golf ball and you turn through, see if you can tap your right foot a couple of times. This will ensure that you have turned your belt buckle on target and your right heel is in the air, without too much weight on your right side at impact.
- Make sure that your belt buckle is pointing parallel to your target line.

Distance Control

Most golfers try and control the distance they want the ball to travel with their swing speed and length. However, the way you should control the distance of the shot is with the amount of loft you have on your sand wedge at impact. There are generally three different length bunker shots, short, medium and long. Square the club face for the longer bunker shots. Open the club face five degrees for medium length bunker shots and open the club face ten degrees for short bunker shots. We want you to start controlling your yardages from out of the bunker by opening and closing your club face at address. We don't want you to control your distances with the length and strength of your golf swing.

- For longer greenside bunker shots, take your regular grip with a square club face.
- For medium length greenside bunker shots, roll the club face open five degrees in your fingers and then grip the club.
- For shorter greenside bunker shots, roll the club face open ten degrees in your fingers and then grip the golf club.
- The length of your greenside bunker shots do not matter, it's always a full golf swing with the clubface controlling the distance of the shots.
- Try and control it with your full swing, speed, slowing it down or speeding it up.

- Regardless of your distance you still have to take a full golf swing at the ball.

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Hard Pan / Buried Lies

The buried lies, hard pan lies, and wet sand use a different method than soft sand.

The club must swing steeper into the bunker to ensure enough sand gets between the club and the ball. Seventy percent of your weight should be on your left foot. The ball should be in the center of your stance. And the club face should remain square.

The rules of golf don't allow you to test the sand. However, you can take your stance and while doing so you should be aware of the texture under your feet.

Does the sand feel firm or is it soft? If the ball is buried or the sand is hard or wet, the method is the same. You'll want the golf club to dig and not glide. The setup and swing you are about to learn will encourage this.

- The ball position should be in the middle of your stance.
- Seventy percent of the weight is on your left side.
- The handle of the golf club is in the middle of your body.
- The club head is de-lofted in this position taking the bounce of the back of the golf club.
- Always leave the club face square at address.
- At impact, try to catch sand to ball not ball, sand.
- Follow through low so the club head does not bounce but digs.
- If you swing it steep enough, this golf club will dig into the dirt and it will have the golf ball jump out and come on the green.
- Hard pan lie, lean left, handle left; this will make the golf club swing up and down and there won't be a bounce.
- If you don't have your weight left, you won't swing the golf club up and down.
- If you have your weight on your right side, the bounce will come into play and you'll wind up sculling the ball over the green.
- If you leave the club face open, the leading edge will not dig into the sand.

Fairway Bunkers

Here are a couple of things when you're in the bunker. Two reasons that you don't turn like a normal golf swing are your feet will move out from underneath you and it will be very difficult to come back and make solid contact with the golf ball. The other reason that you don't make your normal golf swing is because when you turn, the golf club will come in too shallow and you have to be extremely talented to pick the ball off the sand. Think about this question. Every time you're in a fairway bunker for the rest of the year, would you take it if I said, "You could pick it up and walk one hundred yards down the middle of the fairway and put it in the middle of the fairway." Absolutely, the answer is yes.

- Do not use a fairway wood -- they are not designed for this. Their sole is two or three inches wide at the bottom and it's not a digging tool. It's a gliding tool.
- The first thing you do in the bunker is take enough loft to get over.
- If you make your normal golf swing that you usually make on the fairway, you will struggle with this shot because you're going to try and hit this ball thin; very difficult to do.

- Stick to this method of being steep where you hit the golf ball first.

We hope that you have gained valuable insights from this video on how to hit bunker shots and that you can take the lessons that we taught and apply them on the golf course.

We believe these techniques will help you for years to come because of the confidence you'll gain. Good luck and continued success!

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