



Flying Wedges

One of the easiest and quickest ways to lower your scores in 2020 is to improve your *distance control* with your wedges. Bombing long drives is fun, but what good does it do when your wedge shot misses the green? Here are a few things I see the best wedge players in the world all have in common. If you can devote some of your practice time to these concepts, you will see your wedges ending closer to the hole and rapidly dropping scores.

What the Best Do

1. Slightly Open Stance in relation to the target. This allows your hips and your chest to turn though the shot.
2. Narrow Stance: Feet will get closer together depending on the distance of the shot.
3. Center Ball Position: The ball should be in line with your sternum, and head centered over the ball. Having a head position either too far back or too far forward will effect the angle of the club hitting the ground and will give fat shots or too steep chopping motions.
4. Slightly Forward Weight Distribution: I like to see 70% of your weight on your front leg throughout the entire swing.
5. Slower than Average Club Speed: Your feel will be better when you swing the club slower. The best wedge players judge their distance by the length of their backswing and not the speed of the club.



Use Geometry to Wedge it Closer

To paraphrase the geometric definition for a *wedge*, it's a triangular-shaped simple machine used for lifting. If we can relate this to our golf wedge game, we can lift our ball to the desired distance easily.

How To?

Keep the angles created at address between your lead arm and club constant though the swing. To control distance, limit the amount of wrist hinge and unhinge during the swing. This keeps the width of the swing and the loft of the club consistent. It also helps you to create a shallow angle of descent and a small divot. This is the real secret to success for *wedge play*. Set up to the ball and draw a line from your lead shoulder (the one closer to the target; left shoulder for a right-handed golfer) down to the center of the club face. This line will be the longest side of the wedge. You want that distance to remain the same back and through to the finish of the swing. If you then make your lead arm to the grip the second line and then grip to the end of the shaft the third line, you will see a *wedge* has been created. Keep that wedge from changing its shape and you will be able to control how far the ball travels every time.

How Not To?

When the player adds extra wrist hinge in the back swing or flexes the lead elbow, the width of the swing changes, which leads to inconsistent contact and angle of attack. Also, if the wrist angles change around



impact, the loft of the club changes and distances change swing to swing. These things make it difficult to develop consistent distance control.

Now that you have the basics, let's develop three different carry distances derived from three different backswing lengths. You can practice these shots with three distinct backswing positions and find out what your distances are.

Distance 1: When the backswing length has the shaft parallel to the ground. The follow-through will be a similar distance but slightly longer.

Distance 2: When the lead arm is parallel to the ground. Similar follow-through length.

Distance 3: Hands to head backswing. This third length has the backswing ending when your hands reach the level of your head.

I like to use a mirror or record a few swings with my phone to see these different backswing lengths. Once you have the feel of the three different lengths, hit 10 balls with each, starting with the shaft parallel to the ground and working up to see how far these positions carry. Take it to the course and make 2020 the Year of the Flying Wedge.

Mike Carbray is Director of Instruction Butterfield CC and Journey 2 Better Golf 2018 IPGA Teacher of the Year
www.mikecarbraygolf.com
<http://www.linksvideo.net/instruction>

