

Don't lose sight of the green

Before you settle into the bunker, make sure to walk up to the green to get an idea how much room you have to work with (right). In this instance, you have 19 yards to the flag and 36 to the back of the green, meaning you have nearly 20 yards of green beyond the hole. That makes the 54-degree wedge a logical choice because even if you hit the shot farther than you'd like you can keep the ball on the green.



Top 100 Teacher



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Now what?

Your ball is in a crater-like bunker far below the green and 20 yards from the pin. How the heck do you get out of this one?



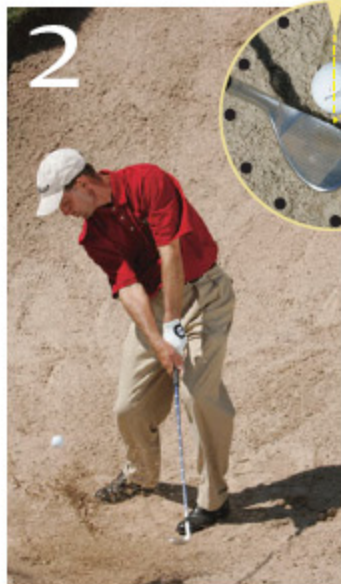
Think "out" first

The last thing you want to do here is hit another bunker shot. With that in mind, it's best to follow the old adage, "Out first, on second, close third." While a lob wedge will get the ball up quicker, the additional loft will force you to swing much harder to generate the speed necessary to get the ball out. You are better served using your 54- or 56-degree sand wedge, opening the face some and making your normal swing, not a fast-paced swing. You'll still have plenty of loft to clear the lip of the bunker.

Don't get intimidated by the steep bunker face. You can get out by opening your stance and clubface, and rotating through the shot. You don't even need your lob wedge.



PHOTOS BY LEONARD KAMSLER



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2 Move those hips

Dial the clubface open about 20 degrees, so it points to 2 o'clock on an imaginary clock face (above). This exposes the club's bounce, or trailing edge, making it less likely you'll stick the club too far in the sand. As you swing down, **keep the clubhead moving with your body**, rotating your hips and torso through just as you do on a full swing (left). **Warning:** If your body stops rotating as the clubhead passes your belly, the clubface closes. This forces the club to dig.



3 Finish your swing

Staring at the steep face of this greenside bunker, it is easy to hang back on your right foot in an attempt to lift the ball into the air. But that will get you nowhere. The clubhead will bottom out too soon and you'll either hit the shot fat or thin. **To shift your weight forward, think about finishing up on your right big toe (left).** For this to happen, your hips have to turn all the way through the shot, providing the power necessary to send the ball up and out. The more you get off your right foot, the more likely the divot is to be under the ball, not several inches behind it. This will help you create enough force to get the ball all the way out.