

How to End Your Slice and Crush Your Driver

By Michael Leonard

Look at PGA Tour players, regardless if they hit it 270 or hit it 330 yards like Dustin Johnson, they all have one thing in common. *They are not afraid to hit their driver and are confident regardless of their past tee shots.*

One of the most common misses by amateurs is the dreaded slice. The shot that starts in the middle of the fairway and ends up in the right trees or on the freeway. A slice travels a fraction of the distance, makes it hard to score great, and can affect other parts of your game.

Don't get me wrong, you don't need to hit 100% of the fairways to become a scratch golfer. The two best players of the generation, Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson, have never been known to hit it particularly straight. As Phil says, "birdies are in the woods." Once you get to Phil's skill level fairways aren't as much of a priority. But for 99% of golfers, you need to have a consistent, relatively straight driver to become a scratch golfer.

Check out these five helpful tips to stop slicing the ball, hit it farther, straighter, and score better each round.

Is Your Driver Right For You?

Before we get into the mechanics, it's important to make sure you own the right driver. Unlike putting, the exact driver you play with has a dramatic effect on the rest of your game. If possible I always recommend getting all your clubs custom fit, especially your driver.

Drivers today are easily adjustable and can significantly help the average golfer. If you suffer from a slice make sure your driver is adjusted to a draw or hook setting.

You will also want to make sure your driver shaft is stiff enough. If your swing is too fast for your driver there will be more flex and allow extra bend at impact. The more bend at impact the more the clubface will open or close at impact. If the club comes in closed it's drawing left and if it comes in open it will slice right.

Loft

You also want to make sure there is enough loft on your driver. A driver with 8 or 9 degrees will be harder to draw than one with 10 or 11 degrees. Most amateurs try to play "professional" driver settings instead of matching equipment to their game. If your driver allows you to adjust the loft make sure your loft is at least 9.5 degrees.

Besides if it's not working you can always change it back with your club tool.

These driver adjustments alone won't cure your slice but it will ensure you are starting off correctly. Make sure to double check your driver and weight settings to ensure you're prepared.

Change Your Grip

One of the most common reasons golfers slice the ball is because of their grip. Your grip can determine how you take the club back and how you release the club at impact.

Many players have a grip that is *very weak*. This usually looks like your thumbs are pointing down the handle of the club. The weaker the grip the easier it is to hit a slice.

Instead, make sure the "V" between your thumb and index fingers points toward the right armpit.

Your grip pressure will also contribute to your shot so make sure to not give it the death grip. You want to grip the driver strong enough but you don't want to choke it to death. By gripping the driver too hard it will be difficult to fully release the club at impact. Not only will you not be able to release the club you will also create tension in your forearms. The more tension, the harder it will be to be relaxed and not try to guide the golf ball.

Less tension = more freedom to swing.

The ideal driver grip is medium strength, with *relaxed forearms at address*. This will ensure you have the best chance at a straight or draw ball flight.

Aim "Right" & Hit it Straight

Most golfers start aiming left once they notice a slice on a few tee balls. If it's a cut (not a slice) then that is a great idea. But, if you start aiming too far left you will begin to notice more often than not your ball will slice even more than before!

Why?

By aiming left with your feet and body you are promoting a swing path that will cut across the golf ball and produce slice spin. More times than not you are also accidentally putting the ball more towards the back of your stance.

This will promote an even bigger slice. Aiming left is also only a temporary, short-term fix instead of addressing the real issue.

Instead of aiming too far left, decide what kind of shot you want to hit on the tee. Then, pick your target (usually a tree branch, house window, or something very small) and commit to the shot. Aim your shoulders parallel to the target as well as your feet. You can also close your feet slightly to promote an inside to out swing path. This path will promote more of a draw than a slice.

One of the easiest ways to check your aim is an alignment club or laying a club down aimed at your target. Alignment clubs should be used in every practice session to ensure you aim at your target and not making the problem worse. To make sure you are aligned properly have a friend video your swing on your phone or set it against something to take a video.

This will help your practice sessions so much by making sure you are addressing the ball correctly.

Swing Inside to Outside

Now that you have the right driver, a correct grip and are aligned properly, it's time to focus on your swing path. The only reason you slice the ball is that you are coming over the top of the golf ball. When you come over the top it will pull the club (hence why it starts left) and have an open face (why it slices).

To fix this you need to ensure your swing path is on a more *inside to out path*. An inside to outside swing path will promote you start the ball right and produce a slight draw.

One of the easiest fixes is to drop your right foot back when you address the ball. By dropping your right foot back your setup will allow you to take the club back slightly inside. It may feel weird at first and do encourage you to practice at the range first.

Range Drill

Take out your driver and drop your right foot back 6 inches from where you normally address the ball. This will feel very different than how you normally stand (it should if you're practicing something new it is supposed to feel different).

You will notice that with your right foot back it is much easier to take the club inside and swing out on the downswing. Try to hit five balls in a row like this producing a massive hook that starts right and comes back left. Once you get a feel for this inch your right foot up again and start to feel the motion of an inside to outside swing path.

Adjust Your Shoulders

Your shoulders can also play a big role when it comes to slicing the golf ball. Most golfers who slice the ball have very flat shoulders and make it easy to come down and over the ball.

Instead, you want to make sure your shoulder position has a slight tilt to it. For a right-handed player this would be having your right shoulder slightly lower than your back shoulder. And vice versa for a left-handed player. This will create a natural tilt when you address the ball.

When your shoulders are titled properly at address you will not only be more inclined to hit a draw you will also have a bigger shoulder turn. *Bigger shoulder turn means more distance.* And who doesn't want more distance?

In regards to the shoulder tilt, this is only referring to the driver. You do not want an upward shoulder tilt with your irons or wedges. The reason you want a proper shoulder tilt is that you want to swing up on the ball as it is teed up.