

Articles and Tips - Got Shank?

Without question, the worst shot in golf is the shank or dreaded hosel fade. This shot occurs when the club swings too much out in front of you at impact. When the club swings too far out in front you, it will contact the ball in the heel or hosel of the club-head. I think for those players that have had this occur, the hardest shot in the game, is the one right after a shanked shot.

The funny thing about this mistake is that most people think the shank comes from the club-face being too open at impact or that they are standing too close to the ball. I do believe that standing too close to the ball at address could cause the problem. However, in most cases a player that shanks it will get too far from it at address in an effort not to hit the hosel or heel of the club.



Correct swing plane

Over my years of watching many swings, I think there are 2 common errors in hitting a shanked shot. The first is in swinging the club too far around the body on the backswing and too far out to the ball at impact.

Pictured below, the club is too far around the body.



The 2nd most common cause is spine movement towards the ball, either on the backswing or on the downswing. Meaning that the body leans in to the ball and the arms, hands, and club move out to the ball at impact. Truthfully speaking in the worst cases, it is a combination of both problems.



Here the spine angle has lowered toward the ball (from the original angle shown above left), and the ball is coming off the hosel.

First, how to fix the spine. Take a small pillow at the house and rest your forehead against the pillow and place the pillow against a wall. Get in a proper golf posture without a club. Practice swinging your arms and rotating the torso back and through without pushing the pillow into the wall. The idea is to feel level in the rotation with no up and down movement. When hitting golf balls try to keep your head up and the spine rotating level and not up and down. Remember, you really don't want to keep your head dead still in the swing, but it can't move up and down and be successful.

Second, how to fix the arms and club swinging too far around the body on the backswing. Practice hitting 3/4 shots with a short iron or wedge. At the 3/4 position on the backswing get a 3/4 rotation of the torso, a 3/4 wrist hinge, and a 3/4 position of the arms so that the left arm is parallel to the ground. When the left arm is parallel to the ground make it feel parallel to the target line. Hit balls trying to not allow the arms or club to swing around too far in the backswing at this 3/4 position.

Practice off a tee with two other tees used as a gate to swing through. If you find that your hitting the outside tee, try to hit the inside tee and see what happens.

