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## ESCAPE THE SAND

with **Tom Stickney**, Bighorn G.C.,  
Palm Desert, Calif. (Top 100 since 2007)



# FLY IT ALL THE WAY FROM A FAIRWAY BUNKER

*When you're stuck on the beach, thin it to win it*

### THIS STORY IS FOR YOU IF...

1. YOUR DRIVING IS ERRATIC, AND YOU SEEM TO FIND A LOT OF FAIRWAY BUNKERS.
2. YOUR SHOTS FROM SAND ARE TYPICALLY CLUNKY AND DON'T GO VERY FAR.

### THE SITUATION

You've hit a wayward drive and landed in a fairway bunker, but you're still within easy mid-iron distance from the green. Plus, the lip is low enough to accommodate your normal iron trajectory.

### THE TYPICAL MISTAKE

You treat this shot like any other sand shot and take too much sand at impact, causing the ball to come up way short of the green.

### THE SMART PLAY

The key to getting the full distance out of any club from a fairway bunker is to make contact with the ball first and then the sand—the exact opposite of what you want when you're in a greenside bunker. It's also what you need from a clean lie in the fairway, but since most amateurs aren't very good at taking a divot after the ball on a regular shot, you need to take special care when in a fairway bunker.



Catching the ball a little thin in a fairway bunker will help you get the full distance from your club and fly the ball all the way to the green.

### DRILL: How to Get a Feel for "Thinning" Your Sand Shots

The next time you're at the range, tee up a practice ball just barely above the turf, with the stripe on the ball set parallel to the ground. Your goal is to simply catch the stripe with the leading edge of your iron. That should give you the right kind of contact to carry the shot the full distance while avoiding most of the sand behind the ball. When you face this shot for real on the course, picture a stripe on the equator of the ball and make that your first contact point. You'll fly it all the way to the green out of the sand almost every time.



### WATCH IT!

Learn more about this tip in a special video lesson with Top 100 Teacher Tom Stickney at [golf.com/sand](http://golf.com/sand), or on our tablet editions.