

Iron Game Need a Lift?

Try These Shaft Fitting Tips

Sometimes you stumble upon the right golf equipment purely by accident. You're at the practice range, pick up a demo club, take a few swings, and like what you find.

Some of those golf clubs may not fit the specifications you've grown accustomed to, but they work.

Now, when you find something that doesn't fit the familiar pattern, your old conditioning starts to kick in. That's when a perfectly good club ends up in the mental trash bin. It just doesn't fit your idea of what you should be playing.

Here's an example. You may not give much thought to light weight iron shafts, although you'd never think twice about using a 65 gram shaft in your driver. Light weight is the mantra for drivers and woods, but irons are a different story.

Realizing that, why don't we look at some basic rules used to fit most golfers for iron shafts...

Typically, low handicap players have set ideas about what clubs should be in their bags. Playing irons with shafts other than Rifle Project X or Dynamic Golds may be unthinkable. Heavy, high bend shafts are the traditional way to go.

Mid to high handicappers may have been steered into playing shafts like the True Temper Dynalite, TT Lite XL, or even the Callaway Memphis 10, none of which are very light by today's standards.

I'm finding that there are countless new iron shaft designs that go largely unexplored by the majority of golfers.

So do me a favor and pretend for a minute that you're looking for a change in your iron game. If you haven't considered light weight iron shafts, let me explain what you can expect in the way of increased distance and performance.

Accuracy and dispersion patterns improve when weight is reduced...

This probably runs counter to what you have been told, but when overall club weight is reduced, most players achieve better dispersion patterns. Why? Because lower total weight translates into better control over the club.

It's important to realize that swingweight and total weight are two different things. Being able to feel the clubhead throughout your swing is more a function of the club's balance point, or swingweight, rather than it's total weight.

You've probably heard that light club weights are supposed to be aimed squarely at mid to handicap players, or seniors with slow swing speeds. But I'm finding that if the club's balance point allows you to feel the clubhead, you'll improve accuracy simply by lowering the golf club's overall weight.

You can easily prove this for yourself. Demo some irons with graphite shafts and compare your performance over the heavier steel shafts you're playing. You're likely to find that your shots end up around the target more often.

Lower total weight also means that distance increases...

Swing speed increases as total weight decreases. That's pretty obvious when you consider that virtually no tour players use steel shafts in their drivers.

The same holds true for irons. What advantages do you gain with lower weight? You'll be using less club to reach par fours and par threes. That means you'll get the benefit of more loft, higher trajectories and better stopping power on the green.

What's more, you won't be swinging as hard to get that distance, and that helps you get better accuracy while increasing distance at the same time.

Now, if you're like me, shrugging off the equipment choices tour pros make takes some discipline. Where else can you look? The Champions or LPGA tours. Go to Golf Digest online and peek in the bags of some those players. You're going to find shaft choices that are more likely to help your game.

Light weight iron shafts don't have to be made out of graphite...

Don't feel hemmed in by graphite if it isn't your preference. True Temper, Royal Precision and Nippon, for example, offer some excellent steel iron shafts in very low weights.

Look at the Dynamic Gold and Dynalite Gold Superlight shafts. Or the Nippon NS Pro shafts, or if you like a stepless design, the Rifle Airlites. These shafts deliver light weight and a variety of bend profiles to suit any player.

Now, if you haven't tried graphite, consider this; I've noticed that players trying graphite iron shafts, tend to prefer the graphite sound and feel over steel when hitting them side by side; don't immediately dismiss graphite if you haven't played it.

Today's graphite shafts are far superior to those made from just a few years ago. The old rules pertaining to graphite shafts simply don't apply any more.

The takeaway message?

If you've been playing more traditional shafts in your irons and feel you're simply not getting everything you can out of your iron game, try going with light weight shafts for better distance and accuracy.