

## ***Matching wedges to your game...***

Wedges are a critically important part of the game and can have dramatic results on your score. Did you know that during a round of golf, golfers play 60% of all their shots from 100 metres or closer to the pin!

Before we break down wedge design and technology in our quest to find the best golf wedge, it's important to understand how a wedge shot works. The make up of the wedge is as essential as it's versatility.

The loft of the club, and its' grooves, work together in harmony to produce the correct spin rate on the ball. This allows players to control the trajectory and roll they want on their shots. This is why most companies offer a number of different lofts that vary from 48 to 64 degrees. These wedges can be bought in different types depending on the feel you want. There are forged carbon steel wedges (with varying finishes), cast stainless steel wedges, with both types available in traditional; blade styles or in cavity designs.

Let's begin by doing a wedge review starting with the groove technology of today. There has been a lot written about the difference in the shape of the grooves in most wedges, but to be honest with you it really doesn't matter if they are U or V-shaped. Testing shows that the ball only makes contact with the front 4 or 5 thousandths of the top of the groove that is 20,000 to 25,000 of an inch deep. The rest of the groove just works as a sort of channel to move the other variables such as dirt, water, grass, etc out of the way during the shot. The one important thing to look out for when searching for the best golf wedge is a consistent transition from the grooves to the flat face of the wedge. Meaning you need a good sharp edge (not razor sharp) on each groove to generate spin on the ball.

Grooves in golf wedges have improved incredibly over the past number of years because the manufactures have started to machine cut them instead of casting them from moulds into the club face. This casting process has often proven to be too inconsistent, where as CNC machining the face makes them perfectly consistent from groove to groove and wedge to wedge.

Golfers can also choose from raw or coated materials for their wedges. Golfers can get a little more spin on their golf wedges by picking raw models that have not been coated with traditional protective chrome plating. These clubs begin to rust quickly after use, which creates added friction on the shots, therefore more spin. One of the most popular finishes is the dark type finish – either an oxide coating, gunmetal finish or the oil stained wedge.

### *Types of Wedges*

#### **Pitching wedge**

This club will usually come with your set when it is purchased. The loft on these clubs are found to be between 46 and 50 degrees.

#### **Gap wedge**

This club can be purchased separately and comes in many different varieties. The loft on these clubs is usually found to be between 51 and 54 degrees. This club is used to fill the gap between the pitching and sand wedge.

#### **Sand wedge**

This club will usually come with your set when it is purchased (or a 'specialty' wedge can be purchased separately). The loft on these clubs is normally found between 55 and 59 degrees. This club is used out of the sand traps, green side bunkers and green side rough.

## **Lob wedge**

This club can be purchased separately and comes in many different varieties. The loft on these clubs are normally found to be between 60 and 64 degrees. This club is used for shorter very high controlled shots that stop quickly. As a general rule, it is suggested that the average player have a gap of 4-6 degrees between each different wedge.

## ***Introducing Bounce...***

Great players understand the importance of wedge play. They also recognize wedge bounce as a key factor in their short game. If they are fitted correctly and use it effectively it almost guarantees them lower scores.

Bounce is the angle difference that is made by the metal flange on the sole of the club and the front edge of the club. This is known as the bounce angle.

Players can use this to their advantage by matching the amount of bounce on their wedges to the grass, sand and soil conditions of their home course (or favorite courses they like to play). They must also match this club set up to their individual styles of swings.

As a general rule of thumb if you play on a course with harder turf and firmer sand in the traps you should be using wedges with less bounce. The lower amount of bounce will help the clubs' leading edge dig down easier into the turf and through the rest of the shot.

On the contrary if you play on a course with softer turf conditions and fluffy sand then you should be using wedges with a little more bounce as this will help prevent the club digging too deeply into the ground thus causing the dreaded fat shot.

In terms of selecting your golf clubs to suit the style of your swing there is also a general rule to follow. Golfers with a steeper (or more upright) swing will tend to do better with a little more bounce because it will prevent their clubs from digging too deep in the ground on the downswing (these type of players are known as "Diggers"). On the other hand those players who have a flatter, more sweeping swing will fare better with wedges with a little less bounce. This will help avoid skidding off the ground with the club and making contact with the middle of the ball. This is otherwise known to golfers as skulling, blading or skinning a shot (these type of players are known as "Sweepers").

If you aren't sure which category you fall into there's a simple way to find out. Just go to your local practice area and hit a few balls with your higher lofted clubs. Then take a look at your divots and use Mother Nature as your own form of technology. If you're taking long deep divots this is a sign of a digger. If you're taking thin shallow or even no divots at all then this is a sign of a sweeper.

Once you recognize your swing type and course conditions it is fairly simple to decide on the amount of wedge bounce angle that you need. With this information your local clubfitter/clubmaker should be able to fit your wedges perfectly to your game and you'll be on your way to shooting lower scores.

### ***Your Golf Wedge Set***

Do you ever wonder if you have the proper golf wedge set to play your best? Is everyone always telling you to try different combinations of wedges? Well I hope these few tips on selecting the right wedges will put an end to all that.

Wedge play is all about feel, which in essence is no different than rest of the game of golf. All the knowledge in the world about how to hit the golf shots won't do any good unless you have the proper golf wedge set that is fitted correctly to your situation.

Every player has to make a decision between gearing their wedges towards the fairways they normally play or the sand traps. We suggest going with the wedge that works best out of the sand. (Simply because it is harder shot for most amateurs to play and proper fitting will make this shot easier). Ideally, you want to find the best compromise that you can between the two, but there just isn't one perfect wedge out there for everything.

This is why you have a number of different types of clubs in your wedge set. The average amateur player should carry 3 different types of wedges; some can get away with 2 if they want. It all depends on the gap between each club. Go with the one you're most comfortable with. We suggest the gap between each wedge be 5 degrees to keep a good level of consistency. So if a player has a pitching wedge (usually comes with set) at 48 degrees he or she might go with two of the following three options : a 52-degree gap wedge, a 56-degree sand wedge or a 60-degree lob wedge. A tour player might go with lower gaps such as 3 degrees because of their ability to play a wider range of shots and higher skill level. All of these different wedges can be purchased individually. Your local clubfitter/clubfitter can help you find what you want as they will have a selection to choose from.

Everything about wedges comes down to feel, so don't be afraid to try a few different ones out until you get the ones you like the best. This game gets a lot more fun when you have the proper wedge set

And remember, these are your scoring clubs so you have to practice them!!!!