

Fairway Shots
With
Long Irons, Hybrids and Fairway Woods

We started with pre season warm up and worked our way through pre-season warm up, putting, chipping and approach shots with short irons to the green. This brings us to the all-important long irons, hybrids and fairway woods, which are used to advance the ball a good distance from off the ground.

These are different from your scoring shots, as they are intended to get you into position so that you can score. These shots come into play after poor tee shots, second shots on long par fours, and on par fives.

To produce a good fairway shot, you must first keep in mind that your main goal is to move the ball a fair distance towards the green, within the confines of the golf course. You are not going to make your best round happen with these shots, but you can limit your success with them. Most of the times I find individuals are trying to do too much by attempting to achieve too much with these shots. You must play within your own ability and means. If you don't have the ability to hit a 3 wood from a poor lie, 250 yards around the corner of the dogleg and to carry it over the pond to the green where the pin is tucked on the front edge, then don't try to. You would most certainly be better off laying up further back where you can approach the pin with a high lofted iron.

I always ask myself, are my chances of gaining a shot equally as good a losing a shot, by trying to hit this particular shot. Most of the time if you really take a look at what you are actually trying to pull off some of the long fairway shots you attempt, versus dividing the distance up into two shots, you would save yourself many shots throughout the year. If I feel I can't easily reach the green, or my lay up with a real long iron, hybrid or wood would be difficult, I will try to identify my yardage to a comfortable distance that I can shoot for. I personally like to be around 100 yards for my approach shots. This is a perfect 56-degree sand wedge for me. Most of the time if you think about going for the green, versus laying up to the comfortable 100 yard marker, you may be talking about the difference of hitting a 3 wood or a 5,6,7 iron. Many times if you miss the green with the long iron or wood, you will end up in a more difficult position than versus leaving up with a mid iron.

With all the newest technology in the golf world, one of the most helpful things that have forever changed these fairway shots was the development of the hybrid. The hybrid, also know as the utility club, has eliminated the need for most long irons, and even some of the fairway woods. They are much easier to hit solidly, which allows individuals an opportunity to produce a nice high straight ball flight from the ground, which is ideal for the fairway shot. The hybrid is also very versatile in regards to the kind of lies, or conditions it can be used in. With companies making full sets of these utility clubs with options ranging from the number one all the way through the lob wedge, there is a hybrid that will get the job done.

When it comes to the actual technique of creating a good fairway shot with a long iron, hybrid or fairway wood you must keep a couple of things in mind. First off if you want a long iron, such as a 4 iron to go like you think a 4 iron should go you must swing it with the tempo of a 7 iron. If you swing it like you think a 4 iron should go, often times it won't even go like a 7 iron. So tempo, tempo, tempo is the key. I also pay close attention to maintaining good balance and focus on making good contact.

I swing these long low and slow on the way back to create a long wide fluid arc, so that I sweep the ball off the ground. You don't want to swing real steep and take big divots with these shots. I also stand a little further away with these clubs to help flatten out the arc to assist with this process.

So when it comes to the long irons, hybrids and fairway woods, stand a little farther away from the ball, take them back low and slow and focus on good rhythm, balance and contact.

Good luck,
Scott Mayer
PGA Professional