



Causes for Bad Shots

All golfers hit bad shots. *But good golfers want to understand why certain shots were bad.* And they are dedicated to practicing in order to take the necessary corrective actions.

I suggest that at one of your practice sessions you *consciously hit bad shots* to help you understand how and why your shots were bad. You only have to do this once because you don't want to instill in yourself bad habits. For example, you can consciously move your head and shoulders ahead of the ball at impact, or not shift your weight on the downswing. Or you can place the ball too far forward or back in your stance. Observe what happens. *Use your session as a learning experience.*

The most common bad shots discussed in this section are: the slice, the hook, topping, a fat shot, the shank, a pull shot and a push shot.

You will notice that *similar causes* may exist for various bad shots. Also, corrective actions may involve a *combination of the causes* for the bad shot.

Remember, the problem may not be with your swing alone, and could very well be with another aspect of your game.

If you continue to have problems, you can have a friend whose opinion you respect evaluate your game, or you might want to take lessons from a professional.



Causes for Bad Shots

The Slice

A slice occurs when the ball starts left and curves sharply to the right.

Possible causes:

- 1) Your body is misaligned to the left of the target line.
- 2) Your shoulders are turned to the left in your set-up position.
- 3) The ball is too far forward in your set-up position.
- 4) Your clubhead is not aligned squarely with the target line in your set-up position.
- 5) You grip the club too far to the left (showing too few knuckles) or too tight.
- 6) *There is too much lateral movement of the right leg, head and upper body on the backswing.*
- 7) Your shoulders don't turn properly on the backswing.
- 8) Your swing path is out-to-in.
- 9) The clubface is open at impact.



Causes for Bad Shots

The Hook

A hook occurs when the ball starts right and curves sharply to the left.

Possible causes:

- 1) Your body is misaligned to the right of the target line.
- 2) Your shoulders are turned to the right in your set-up position.
- 3) *The ball is too far back in your set-up position.*
- 4) Your clubhead is not aligned squarely with the target line in your set-up position.
- 5) You grip the club too far to the right (showing too many knuckles) or too tight.
- 6) Your takeaway of the club is too close to the inside of your body.
- 7) Your swing path is in-to-out.
- 8) The clubface is closed at impact.



Causes for Bad Shots

Topping

Topping the ball occurs when you strike the ball close to the top with the bottom of the club, rather than the center of the club making contact with the back of the ball.

Possible causes:

- 1) *The ball is too far forward in your set-up position.*
- 2) Your body posture is too crouched over in your set-up position.
- 3) Your knees are too rigid and not properly flexed.
- 4) You grip the club too tightly creating tension in your arms and hands.
- 5) You don't make a complete shoulder turn.
- 6) Your head and shoulders move upward at impact.



Causes for Bad Shots

A Fat Shot

A fat shot occurs when the club strikes the ground before it strikes the ball.

Possible causes:

- 1) *Your body is too close to the ball in your set-up position.*
- 2) The ball is too far back in your set-up position.
- 3) Your body posture is too crouched over in your set-up position.
- 4) There is too much tension in your arms and hands.
- 5) You don't turn your shoulders properly on the backswing.
- 6) Your body weight stays on the right side on the downswing.
- 7) Your downswing is on too steep of a plane.
- 8) You slow down your downswing just before impact.



Causes for Bad Shots

The Shank

A shank occurs when the ball is struck with the heel of the club and the ball goes sharply to the right almost at a 90 degree angle.

Possible causes:

- 1) Your body is too close to the ball in your set-up position.
- 2) Your grip on the club is wrong or too tight.
- 3) There is too much tension in your arms and hands.
- 4) You slow down the club on the downswing just before impact.
- 5) Your clubhead is outside the ball on your downswing.
- 6) *Your head and shoulders are ahead of the ball at impact.*

Causes for Bad Shots



A Pull Shot

A pull shot occurs when the shot starts straight to the left and then curves slightly to the left.

Possible causes:

- 1) Your body is not aligned parallel to the target line in your set-up position.
- 2) The ball is too far forward in your set-up position.
- 3) *Your body posture is too crouched over in your set-up position.*
- 4) You grip the club too far to the right (showing too many knuckles) or too tight.
- 5) Your shoulders don't turn properly on the backswing.
- 6) Your body weight transfer to the left side begins with the upper body and shoulders rather than with your left heel down.
- 7) The rhythm of your downswing is too fast.
- 8) The clubface is closed at impact.



Causes for Bad Shots

A Push Shot

A push shot occurs when the shot starts straight to the right and then curves slightly to the right.

Possible causes:

- 1) *Your body is not aligned parallel to the target line in your set-up position.*
- 2) *The ball is too far back in your set-up position.*
- 3) *You grip the club too far to the left (showing too few knuckles) in your set-up position.*
- 4) *Your head and upper body are ahead of the ball at impact.*
- 5) *The clubface is open at impact.*