

Driving for Distance

HIT THE BALL FURTHER WITH THESE TIPS FROM CARLO BORUNDA, NEWPORT BEACH COUNTRY CLUB'S DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION.

BY ASHLEY RYAN

Many people associate golf with accuracy and, while precision can be an important element, hitting for distance can really help you improve your overall score. In fact, driving for distance ensures that you have more control over subsequent shots for a quicker path to the hole.

According to Carlo Borunda, the director of instruction at Newport Beach Country Club, learning how to gain distance is a pivotal skill for improving on the course. "It has been proven statistically that the closer you can hit your golf ball to the hole, the lower your score will be," he says. "It is a major advantage when a

golfer can generate power or distance through a combination of technique and equipment. This will allow you to use more lofted golf clubs for your approach shots, which will improve your proximity to the hole."

Here, Borunda offers tips on how you can hit for distance to step up your game.

Bay Window: What are some of your tips for gaining distance?

Carlo Borunda: Most golfers can create more distance by focusing their practice on three basic skills, which are improving centeredness of contact with the golf ball, establishing a

powerful backswing and understanding the different attack angles when striking the ball. These three skills are all very important because, every time you make contact with a golf ball, you create backspin. Generating more spin is essential for your approach shots to the green, because it allows your golf ball to stop closer to the hole.

However, too much spin with your fairway woods and driver will rob you of distance, because the golf ball will not fly as far and will stop too quickly once it lands. The basic concept is distance = club head speed + centeredness of impact + launch angle.

A Correct body position / weight transfer to promote a higher launch angle for a fairway wood and driver. **B** Correct body position / weight transfer to promote the downward attack angle for approach shots with your irons. **C** Center contact versus off-center contact, which greatly affects how far the golf ball will travel.



D1

Club / mph	Smash	Spin / rpm
104.3	1.42	3539
Ball / mph	Carry / yds	Launch / deg
147.7	230.1	13.5

D2

Club / mph	Smash	Spin / rpm
103.1	1.49	2477
Ball / mph	Carry / yds	Launch / deg
153.7	250.2	14.8

D1-D2 Practicing with a launch monitor will show how the overall carry of the golf ball is affected by your contact.

BW: Are there any specific clubs golfers can use to help with this?

CB: I recommend training with a pitching wedge, a fairway wood and a driver when trying to develop more distance. For the pitching wedge, practice improving your downward attack angle by shifting more weight to your left foot at impact. This will improve your ability to compress the ball between the club face and turf, which is key to produce more ball speed and backspin.

With the fairway wood and driver, learn to shift your lower body to the left at impact while keeping your upper body slightly back. This will promote an upward angle of attack, which is key for producing minimal backspin and the correct launch angle for these less-lofted clubs.

Lastly, every golfer should go through a club fitting at least once a year. Golf equipment is constantly improving and you need to take advantage of what golf manufacturers are offering. I absolutely love my Callaway golf clubs, because they are one of the best at building clubs that produce the most distance while maintaining forgiveness for my off-center hits.

BW: Is there any other equipment that may be beneficial for this?

CB: A launch monitor is a very useful tool when you practice. You only need to invest a few hundred dollars, compared to the several thousand that the professionals use for their practice. The basic data I get from my FlightScope Mevo provides me with enough information to monitor my improvement whenever I practice.

BW: Does the club need to hit the ball in a specific spot to ensure it can travel maximum distance?

CB: Centeredness of contact and the angle of the club head at impact are essential to generating maximum distance. Studies have proven you can lose more than 20% of your distance if contact is 1 inch from the center of the club face and the club face is

open to your target line.

BW: How should golfers tailor their swing when hitting for distance?

CB: The average golfer can benefit from improving how they create leverage. Most golfers incorrectly believe that they must have a straight left arm (for a right-handed golfer) in their backswing. I agree that this should be a goal, but only when it doesn't create tension and restrict the length and width of your backswing. I like to encourage my students to maximize how they rotate their body and create leverage with their arms and wrists. Most golfers are not as strong or flexible as the LPGA or PGA Tour golfers so it's best to use their powerful swings as a model, but adjust the technique to [your own] physical capabilities.

BW: What about stance?

CB: Your stance should promote mobility and balance. Since we all have different body types, it is helpful to experiment with different stances until you feel the most athletic and powerful when addressing the golf ball.

BW: How important are golf fundamentals when trying to gain distance?

CB: Your fundamentals are the most important technique you have if you want to be a consistent and powerful golfer. As a golf professional, I'm always reviewing the fundamentals with my athletes so they can best enjoy the way they play the game.

BW: Are there any drills golfers can practice on the course for gaining distance?

CB: Tension has a very negative affect on producing distance. I recommend making several practice swings throughout your round to allow your arms, hands and body to feel relaxed. I also monitor my breathing as I play so I can get the proper amount of oxygen before every shot.

BW: What about at home?

CB: Training at home with speed sticks from SuperSpeed Golf is a great program to increase distance. I also recommend buying an impact bag.

BW: Are there any non-golf workouts or exercises that can help golfers increase their distance?

CB: Every golfer should work on improving their strength, mobility and flexibility as they train. As you can imagine these are all vital to generating power but are also important in preventing injuries.

BW: Any other advice?

CB: I recommend working with a PGA golf instructor or coach on a regular basis so you can take advantage of their expertise before you create some bad habits.

E Backswing where too much focus is on keeping the left arm straight, which creates tension

F Powerful backswing where the body is relaxed and fully rotated, which will help generate maximum club head speed.

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