

Fixing Your Slices and Hooks When Driving

Performing the perfect drive is far from being easy. Not only are there a multitude of factors to consider, but you'll also need to harness as much power as you can, and combine that with *great* accuracy.

Of course, as you could probably expect, even professional golfers rarely hit 'perfect' drives. Admittedly, they stand a much higher chance of doing so than regular Joe's, but even with all that training, all that practice, and all that experience, things can still go wrong.

Taking this into account, it should be no surprise that most beginners find themselves faced with numerous problems with driving.

Forget about playing the 'perfect' drive, for a beginner, even a decent drive would be an *accomplishment* in view of the complexity and sheer amount of things that can go wrong during the drive.

Among all these problems, no two are more common than *slices* and *hooks*.

Heard the names before? Chances are that you have, but don't worry too much if you aren't fully sure what exactly both of these problems are; soon enough, we'll be giving you the lowdown on what they entail.

If you are facing problems with slices and hooks, or even if you simply want to never have to face problems with them, well, you've come to the right place.

Within this guide, you're going to find comprehensive instructions on how you can both avoid ever slicing or hooking the ball, and fix an existing slicing or hooking problem. And the best part is, we're going to be going about it in a completely beginner-friendly manner.

To put it in simple terms, we're going to be working at slicing and hooking from the ground up, and leave no stone unturned as we show you just what you need to be doing. By letting you really and truly understand slicing and hooking, you'll find that the solution, when presented to you, is just that much easier to follow.

And all the while, you'll be exploring and learning more about golf in general.

No matter what level of golf you play, this guide can help you out with these two tedious problems that plague so many golfers. All you need to do is sit back, and pay attention as you read through it.

Then just take all that you know, and put it into action.

Course it isn't nearly as easy as it *sounds*, but then again, the way we're going to go about it, you'll find that it isn't too complicated either.

Anyway, let's kick things off, with a look and what exactly it means to slice or hook the golf ball during your drives.

“What is Slicing and Hooking?”

Before we actually get into this, there's a common terminology mix up that many beginners tend to make, and so it'd be best if we just clear the air and put you on the right track.

This mix up stems from the fact that slicing is often used as a very broad term to describe hooking as well. Make no mistake, they are very similar, as you're about to see, but we're going to be distinguishing them so that when we say 'slicing' you know exactly what type of shot we're talking about.

Bearing that in mind, what exactly is slicing and hooking?

Well, to be entirely honest it differs slightly from player to player, depending on whether you're right handed or left handed. Basically, this variation is based on the perspective of the player, seeing as a player who is right handed, would be standing to the left of the ball, whereas a player who is left handed would be standing to the right of the ball.

Don't worry if that confused you slightly, you'll start to understand it more soon.

Let's deal with slicing first: Slicing is basically a shot that veers off sharply from left to right, if you're right handed, or right to left, if you're left handed. Now do you see what we mean by it varying?

Pretty much the same type of scenario applies for hooking, only in reverse. That means that a hook is basically a shot that veers off sharply from right to left, if you're right handed, or left to right, if you're left handed.

Having covered that, you probably noticed that both slicing and hooking essentially are very similar type of problems, and their only difference is the *direction* in which the ball veers off to. Also, you probably see why some people just end up calling all types of shots of this kind as 'slicing'.

It would be a fairly safe bet to assume that you've seen this kind of shot before, especially when you first started trying to drive. Really, it is a very common problem, and there's nothing to feel ashamed about when it happens.

Admittedly, some experienced players can *intentionally* slice or hook their shots, and it has even been known to work well in certain specific situations.

For now though, you're probably less interested in that and more interested in actually fixing your drive so that you don't end up slicing and hooking. Well, we're going to get started on that in a minute, but first, how about a short exploration of exactly why unintentional hooking and slicing is going to be a huge detriment to your game.

Disadvantages of Hooked and Sliced Shots

You're undoubtedly wondering why we're bothering with this section. Really, it does seem as though the disadvantages of hooking or slicing a drive are rather obvious, even to a complete beginner.

While that may be at very least part true, you'd be surprised at what you can discover when you look at something closely.

Anyway, just to get it out of the way, it must be said that the main disadvantage of a hooked or sliced shot is that, by definition, it ends up veering way off target. So instead of landing anywhere close to where you wanted it to land, it goes somewhere else entirely.

In terms of your golf game, that means that you now have to recover from that hooked or sliced shot, and get your ball back to where it should have gone in the first place. Needless to say, this means that you're going to a stroke or more.

On top of that, when a hook or slice veers really wildly off target, it could end up landing in the tree line, or some other hazard that is around the golf course. When this happens, you not only need to recover, but you need to recover while in a much worse position.

To sum it up, a hooked or sliced shot really does represent a potential disaster as far as your hole is concerned. But the disadvantages *don't* just stop there.

Being the type of game that golf is, you require a certain amount of concentration and a relatively clear mind in order to perform optimally. Having to face the result of a hooked or sliced shot is definitely counterproductive to this.

Many beginners find that a hooked or sliced shot is only the first of numerous other mistakes. Generally speaking this is caused by the fact that once you hook or slice a shot badly; you end up stressing yourself out somewhat, and automatically tense up.

Once that happens, you're going to find that your entire game is affected, as being tense tends to lead to mistake after mistake in every shot that you take.

More experienced golfers find it a lot easier to mentally recover from a mistake like a hooked or sliced shot, on top of the fact that they tend to hook and slice a lot less in the first place. So if you feel yourself getting too tense after a particularly bad slice or hook, take a deep breath and try to relax yourself.

After all, even though a single hook or slice may be very detrimental, it isn't the end of the world, and it certainly isn't worth letting your entire game be affected by it.

As you can see, there's more to the disadvantages of hooking and slicing than purely having a shot go awry. Dealing with the mental disadvantages in particular is going to be something that you'll pick up with experience.

But what better way to deal with these disadvantages, than just simply never have to face them?

Okay, maybe 'never' is too strong a word, but if you can minimize the risk of slicing or hooking, you're going to be impacted by the disadvantages a lot less anyway. Of course, that's the central idea of this guide!

To take the first steps towards eliminating hooking and slicing, we should take a comprehensive look at what actually *causes* both of these problems though.

Causes of Hooking and Slicing a Drive

What exactly is it that causes the ball to veer off, whether to the left, or to the right? What affects how much exactly it veers off, and how far off target it ends up?

These are the sort of questions that need answers before you can even begin to think of fixing your hook or slice. Don't worry; you're not going to need to be a golf expert to understand why the ball veers off during the shot.

All that you do need to do is *understand* the logic of the discussion that we're about to have.

Now, to begin with, for the ball to be veering off once it is hit, that automatically means that something went wrong with the shot. After all, the *only* thing that happened between the ball sitting still on the tee and then flying off completely off target is that your golf club made contact with it.

That should offer you a hint about what went wrong: It must be the contact between the club and the ball that somehow was behind the final shot being sliced or hooked.

If you know anything about driving, you should know that the idea is to hit the ball as squarely as possible. When the club face is completely square, the contact is perfect, and the ball is bound to fly straight.

Therefore, it is safe to assume that hooking and slicing is caused by the club face not being square on contact, and therefore causing an impact that results in the ball veering off in one direction or other.

And this is indeed the right assumption. When the ball is not hit squarely, and the club is either open or closed on impact, it is going to cause the ball to rotate either clockwise, or counter-clockwise.

It is this rotation that causes the golf ball to move off in either the direction of a hook or slice.

Maybe some of the grand mystery of hooking and slicing is already fitting together in your mind, seeing as you now know the cause for both. No big deal if you're still drawing a blank though.

What you may have already guessed is that the club faced not being square can be caused by various factors, and in order to fix your hook or slice, you're going to have to find out where exactly you're going wrong.

In order to do that, you need to know the potential areas in which you *could* be going wrong in the first place.

Factors That Affect Golf Swings

Right now, we're interested in any and all factors that affect golf swings. Why? Well, because it is the swing that puts your club in contact with the ball, and if your swing is off, then you're not going to be getting a square impact, and that's going to cause a slice or hook.

Essentially, this could be anything and everything, but a couple of the usual suspects instantly pop into mind.

Such things as grip, stance, and even the swing motion itself all play a role in determining the success of the drive. If even one of these three is not right, then it could certainly explain why your club is not impacting the ball squarely.

An interesting fact to note at this juncture though is that, frankly speaking, pretty much no one really hits the ball perfectly square. Some come close on a very consistent basis, but that's about the extent of it.

Of course, this doesn't mean that everyone is slicing and hooking the ball with every drive. Normally, even if your golf club isn't perfectly square, so long as it's square enough you should attain a reasonable drive.

Still, each and every person does have a tendency to hit the ball in a certain way. That's why you may notice that you tend to either hook or slice, but not both, unless your swing really isn't consistent at all.

Anyway, the reason this is of interest to us is because it points ever more firmly to the fact that it is something within the swing itself that is causing this tendency. Thus, the previous three suspects that we'd mentioned earlier are a good place to start.

Let's round them up right now, because they're going to be the focus point of a lot of what we talk about soon:

1. How you grip your golf clubs
2. Your stance and position before the swing
3. The motion of your swing itself

Properly carried out, these three factors should give you a great swing that rarely, if ever, ends up slicing or hooking the ball.

Knowing what you know now, you should realize that really, there are two ways in which you can tackle the problem. And you can choose from either of them really, though as you're about to see, it might be worthwhile to choose one over the other.

Methods of Fixing a Slice or Hook

Just a second ago, we'd mentioned the fact that you have options, and you do, owing to the fact that what you're essentially trying to fix is your swing.

How would you go about fixing your swing? Well, that's where the options come into play. If you think about it, you'll realize that you can choose between one of the following:

1. Start from scratch and work on your driving swing from the basics so that you improve every aspect of it and end up hooking and slicing less.
2. Identify the mistake (or mistakes) that you're making in your swing, and work towards correcting them.

Which one would you pick, right now? Really, both of them sound pretty reasonable, but one is going to be the better option, and that's the one that we're going to be pursuing. Can you guess which it is?

Cutting a long story short, what you should be looking at is the second option, i.e. identifying the mistakes and then fixing them. In a nutshell, this option is generally better because it is a lot less time consuming than starting from scratch with your driving swing.

Furthermore, even if you do start from scratch and work on your driving swing, you may end up finding that it was all for nothing. Suffice to say, if you have a certain tendency towards making a certain mistake, and you don't know about it, when even when you rework your swing, you could end up unknowingly committing the same mistake.

Naturally, identifying your mistake is something that would be tough to do, unless you know what you're looking for, specifically. Yes, that's where this guide comes in, and that's what we're going to be dealing with from here on out.

Even if you're a total beginner, and your swing is really not that great or consistent, you'll find that as we're discussing the common mistakes that cause slices and hooks, you'll gain a much greater understanding of the swing as a whole.

In doing so, you'll be able to improve *all* areas of your swing.

Now that we've decided on the approach that we're going to be taking, it is high time that we got stuck into fixing your slices and hooks. Having identified the three areas we're going to be working on, let's go over them one by one, while highlighting the possible mistakes that you may be making.

Are you ready to begin?

Fixing Your Driving Grip

As a golfer, you should know just how important your grip is to, well, absolutely everything about your swing itself. Being the connection between you and your club, it is the medium through which the force of your swing is channeled.

And it also determines the positioning of your golf club during the swing.

The latter is the more important fact for us, and it is the reason why we're looking at your grip first to find out if anything is wrong with it. Depending on how you grip your club, it will move differently during the swing.

Different does not necessarily mean 'wrong' however, and in truth, different golfers do tend to use different types of grips. However, we're not so much interested in the type of grip that you're using as we are with its nature.

Shall we explore that a little deeper?

How Your Grip's Nature Affects Your Swing

When we say the 'nature' of your grip, we're really talking about two things in particular; the manner in which you grip your club, as well as it's the strength, or firmness, of your grip. Each of these can affect your swing in different ways.

Disregarding the particular type of grip you're using, the manner in which you grip your club, if incorrect, could be causing your club to automatically come down from the backswing as open (and cause a slice) or closed (and cause a hook).

Similarly, if your grip is too firm, you could be causing your arms to tense up, and then an entire number of things could go wrong. On the flipside, if your grip is too light, your club may be inadvertently shifting during the course of the swing, and thus ending up not hitting the ball squarely.

Without a doubt, both of these factors play a huge role in your swing, and more importantly, both carry the potential to cause slices and hooks. Or, perhaps even both, as you'll soon see when we look into it just a tad more.

Acquiring the 'perfect' grip is definitely the target that you want to aim for, and we're already well on our way towards it.

Now that you've established how your grip's nature affects your swing, what you need to do is figure out what exactly is the problem that you're facing in particular.

Identifying the Problem in Your Grip

Before you even begin to wonder what the problem with your grip is, you should determine whether you have a tendency to slice or hook, or even just do both. Once you've done that, you'll be able to eliminate a whole set of potential problems, and get to the root cause that much faster.

To help you along, we're going to break down the problems individually, and look at what might be going wrong based on whether or not you're slicing or hooking.

Slicing the Ball

If you seem to have a tendency to slice the ball, then your very first port of call should be the manner in which you grip the club. Basically, you know that you want to hit the club squarely, and so your grip should be holding the club in the way when it makes contact with the ball.

Try to perform a few mock drives while noticing the position of your hands, and whether or not they turn the club and cause it to open upon contact. If they do, then bingo, you have your culprit.

Otherwise, another prime cause of slicing that is caused by your grip could simply be the fact that it isn't strong enough, and is allowing your club to shift and open up during the swing. Adapt a more firm grip and see if that produces any results.

Through a little bit of trial and error, you should be able to spot whether or not your problem lies here, or elsewhere. If it does, then strengthening your grip, and rotating your clubface so that it is less open and more closed, could be the solution that you need.

Hooking the Ball

Just as with slicing, hooking the ball is equally affected by the manner in which you grip your club, only this time, the reverse is true. If you have a tendency to hook the ball, then it might be that you're rotating the clubface too much during the downswing, and causing it to be closed on impact.

Once again, with a few trial drives, you should be able to notice and identify whether the position of your grip is causing your club to rotate in this way. Often, the real cause tends to be an overactive right hand in the grip.

If that isn't the issue, then just try to adapt a slightly lighter grip instead, and see if your problem was that you were gripping way too firmly. Ideally speaking, your grip should be firm enough to keep control, but not too firm as to cause tenseness or result in your clubface closing too easily.

Find out if this is the problem, and then adapt the fixes into your regular play in order to avoid ever hooking the ball again.

Adapting a Good Grip

By following what we've just prescribed, you should be able to easily take care of any and all problems that you have with your grip. Of course, it will take time and practice for you to get used to any adaptations that you've made to your grip to correct these problems.

Take things slow to start off with, but always be aware of the mistakes that you identified, as well as what you're trying to do to fix them.

While you're at it, watch out in particular for sloppy wrists! If your wrists are weak, then your leading hand may not be as firm as it should be on impact, meaning that it will be your trailing hand that is, quite literally, 'calling the shots'.

Most often, this leads to a hook.

In time, you'll feel more at home with your new grip and will no longer have to constantly remind yourself of what you're trying to achieve. Once you reach that point, you should be scot free of all the problems that you had with slicing and hooking.

Then again, if your problem wasn't in your grip, you're going to have to look elsewhere before you can fix your drive. How about we move on to the next factor that might be playing a role in your slicing and hooking?

Fixing Your Driving Stance

Seeing as we've already dealt with grip, next up on our schedule is stance, and it is probably just as important as grip is within the game of golf. Essentially, the way in which your body is positioned and how you're standing is inevitably going to affect your actual swing itself.

What you need to do is make certain that you're taking up the right position before you even swing the golf club.

Based on your position, you'll notice certain tendencies begin to emerge, such as a seemingly predisposition to opening the clubface during the swing, or even closing it. These are the problem areas that you'll need to address.

Let's break down your stance so that we can better see what's going on in it, and then following that, actually begin to adapt the right kind of stance.

Focal Areas of Stance

As far as you know thus far, something about your stance could be causing you to hook or slice the ball, but what exactly could that be? Well, there are really quite a number of areas within your stance that may be playing the role of the culprit, and so the only way to be absolutely certain is to explore them all.

First off, there is your body position, which should be as square as possible, with your shoulders, hips, and feet all running parallel to the line of your target, and your knees bent slightly.

This is, as you probably know, the standard body position that you should already be using.

However, if your body position is not square, then it could explain why you're slicing or hooking the ball. Tilted shoulders or hips are most often the causes of a wrong body position, but occasionally some beginners end up carelessly letting their feet go astray as well.

But why are these areas so important?

For the most part, it ties in with your aim, or rather, your target line. If your body position isn't parallel to your target line, but instead more to the right, then you're pretty much setting yourself up to slice the ball.

In exactly that fashion, if your body position is more to the left, then you're on route to hooking the ball.

Knowing all of this, you should already see that fixing your stance is really not going to be all that complicated, assuming that it *is* the problem. For the sake of being thorough, we're going to guide you through what you need to do.

Adapting Your Stance

Although nowhere near as involved as grip, you should pay close attention to these instructions on how to adapt your stance, just so that you don't end up doing something counterproductive, such as adapting an even *worse* stance.

One of the most basic ways to begin, is to simply alter your aim to compensate for your tendency to either hook or slice.

Nothing could be easier: If you tend to slice your drives, then you should aim a little more to the left to compensate. On the other side of the coin, if you tend to hook your drives, then you should aim a little more to the right to compensate instead.

Be warned though, you should adjust your aim in very small quantities; otherwise you risk just going from hooking to slicing, or vice versa.

With each adjustment, check your alignment, in terms of how your stance lines up against your target line. Because you're doing this manually, a certain amount of leeway is to be expected, but it will give you a good reference point for each further adjustment.

Sometimes, laying a club on the ground, parallel to your aim, is a good way to do this.

Give yourself time to get used to each adjustment, and don't just dismiss one out of hand if it doesn't seem to produce results the first time round. Really, it is a pretty painstaking process, and you have to be willing to let both your mind and your body get used to adjustments before you can expect to see any results.

Assuming that the problem really is your stance and aim, after a few adjustments and a little practice you should see improvements in the rate at which you slice or hook your shots. When you do begin to notice some improvements make mental note of your stance, and try to keep reproducing it from there on out.

Eventually, it should become so much a part and parcel of your game that you lapse into it automatically.

Incidentally, we're now two down, with just one area of diagnosis left to go. It shouldn't shock you though that the swing motion is probably one of the more important areas, and for the rank beginner, is an area that is very frequently not properly addressed.

Let us get to fixing that now.

Fixing Your Driving Swing

Finally, we're near the finish line, as far as your diagnosis goes anyway. Arguably, the real work only begins once you actually get down and dirty and start to fix your slicing and hooking tendencies, but that's another story entirely.

Here and now, our focus is going to be the motion of your swing itself.

Fluid and smooth are two words that are often used to describe the perfect swing, but really, the perfect swing can be divided into three parts, two of which are relevant to us really: the backswing and the downswing.

Basically, the backswing is, well, the motion of swinging your club back, whereas the downswing is simply the motion of bringing your club back down and making contact with the ball.

After that there is the followthrough, but by that point your ball should be miles away, and so it is a lot less relevant considering we're discussing hooking and slicing.

Up to this point, we've gone over both grip and stance, which are two crucial components that will invariably end up helping your swing along. Great – but the truth is that even with the ideal grip and stance, you could still very well end up mucking up your swing.

That's why if you've already checked for problems in both those areas, and found none, then the culprit is most definitely going to be somewhere in your swing, and what you need to be doing is somehow locating it, and exterminating it.

How you can go about accomplishing this is really rather tricky, so let's first look at how your swing could be causing slicing and hooking, and then move on from there to try to identify specific areas which you could improve.

By the time we're through with this, you should have a swing that you can be proud of.

Identifying Parts of Your Swing Can Influence Slicing and Hooking

Remember how we were just talking about the backswing and the downswing? Well, the truth is the *majority* of problems people have with hooking and slicing stem from the former, as opposed to the later.

Of course this doesn't mean to say that there is no chance that your downswing is horridly wrong – it could very well be, but the chances are that any problem with your downswing actually stems from your backswing itself.

Just as we did with grip, we're going to have to split this section up into two portions, one to discuss slicing, and another to discuss hooking. That way, you could just refer to the part that you need.

If you just want to find out more though, there's no harm reading *both*.

Swinging and Slicing

Should you find that your problem is predominantly with slicing the ball, well, that could mean a number of things when it comes to your swing, and you'll definitely want to eliminate them one by one.

One of the most probable causes is that your club is approaching the ball at an angle that is way too steep, and therefore when you compensate for this, you're inadvertently opening up your clubface and... well, slicing.

It may come as a small surprise to you, but this problem really doesn't stem from the downswing, but rather, it comes from the backswing itself, and the tendency to go too high 'up' when you're taking a swing.

To identify this problem, just pause your backswing at its highest point, and make a note of where your club's shaft is positioned. It *should* be over your shoulder, and *not* above your head.

If it is above your head, well, tweak it!

Another equally common mistake made by slicers is that they give in to the temptation to rotate the club clockwise during their backswing. And yes, it really is a temptation, as it does feel very natural when you do so.

In reality however, all that this is doing is giving you an open clubface when you finally do bring the club back down and make contact with the ball. As they say, the rest is pretty much history.

So long as you're able to notice whether or not you are rotating the club, you should be able to spot this problem easily, if you have it. Ideally, you should not twist, turn, or rotate the club at all during your backswing.

All that you need to do is move the club back.

Notice how most of the problems with the downswing really do come from the backswing? Well, the only real thing that you need to be careful of in your downswing itself is trying to force your club to close, or open, to compensate for what you feel is shaping out to be a bad swing.

Normally, this ends up causing more slices than it does solving them, so a good rule of thumb is to never forcibly alter your natural swing rhythm.

That's it! Time to take a look at hooking!

Swinging and Hooking

Without a doubt, you're going to find a lot of this to be fairly similar to the section on slicing. Then again, you probably expected as much, considering that you're now very well versed in just how similar both hooking and slicing actually are.

Anyway, let's look at the first situation that we looked at in slicing. Instead of finding the problem to be a matter of coming in at too steep an angle though, for hooking, the problem is reversed, i.e. the angle is too shallow.

Once again, to see whether or not your backswing is causing this problem, you're going to want to check out the position of your club's shaft at the highest point of the backswing. Remember, the ideal position it should be in is above your shoulder.

But if you do have this problem, then you'll notice that the club is not above your shoulder, but rather too much behind it.

Tweak your backswing accordingly, by lifting your club upwards, instead of backwards, when you're undertaking it.

As you also probably guessed, the next most common problem is rotation of the club when beginning the backswing. Only this time, yes, it isn't clockwise but counter-clockwise.

Make note of this problem if you notice it, and then remember to not twist, turn, twitch, twirl, or really do anything with your hands other than simply move them backwards!

Last, but certainly not least, remember that you're not going to forcibly alter your swing rhythm, or try to compensate for any error you might feel is about to happen during the swing itself.

By that point, it really is way too late.

Hopefully, you've been able to identify what's causing your hooking and slicing by now, and that's really what the primary objective should be. If you haven't, well, don't sweat it. Normally it really does take some time spent actually trying your swing, grip and stance out first hand before you do.

Before we leave you to go to just that though, let's just go over some of the bases that we've covered.

Conclusion

Hooking and slicing: Two of the most common problems faced by golfers of various expertise levels, and yet *you* now should know how to deal with them both!

In this guide, we've given you a comprehensive look at both of these problems, insofar as what they are, what causes them, what factors are behind them, how you can identify where your problems lie, and how you can fix them too.

To put it quite simply: We've gone over the A to Z of fixing any slicing or hooking problems that you may have.

Course, you'll need to apply all of the knowledge that you now have for it to be of any use to you. No point learning it all and then just forgetting about it and continuing to hook and slice your way through each hole of golf that you play.

But yes, now that you do know the full picture regarding hooking and slicing, you're ready to move on from being a total beginner, and start being... well, a beginner that can drive like a professional!

Bear in mind that over the course of this guide, we've covered a number of areas of golf that really extend beyond just dealing with slicing and hooking. Although that was our focus, what you've learnt here and now is more than just that.

What you've learnt is the foundations of good golf – and it just so happens that those foundations are what helps kick the slicing or hooking habit.

So good luck getting rid of those pesky hooks and slices, and who knows, maybe someday you'll even become a professional and know how to intentionally hook and slice the ball.

All the best with your golfing!