

Stop Slicing

. . . Guaranteed

Seven Easy Steps to Cure the
Most Difficult Problem in Golf

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Joseph Michael Davidson

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Introduction

Introduction
Slice Terms Illustrated
A Quick Fix

Introduction

This book is written for the more than 20 million golfers who are cursed with a slice. It will help you understand the cause of your slice, and most important, provide a step by step program to cure your slice.

The slice is very difficult to cure because it's usually caused by two interrelated factors. Either factor by itself or both factors working together can cause the slice. It is the most persistent problem the majority golfers will ever suffer. Most golfers don't understand the real complexities of the slice. I will fully cover the causes and physics of the slice in Chapters Five & Six. A quick True-False test will measure your understanding of the slice in Chapter One.

I realize this book will not miraculously cure every golfer of his slice. However, I am sure it will greatly help those who take the time to read and follow the suggestions set forth. For those who are looking for an immediate solution I have included a section on finding a "Quick Fix" for your slice in Chapter One.

The book will not go into complex swing theories. There are many "right ways" to hit a golf ball. No matter how you get it there, what counts is how the clubhead hits the golf ball. I will try to give you easy to understand, helpful information about slicing, its causes and cure in this book. I have also included drills that have proven helpful for many slicers.

Slicing is an equal opportunity curse. It strikes all races and nationalities equally. For those females who do suffer the malady I welcome you to the fellowship of the damned and certainly recognize your equality in all areas of anguish. However for ease of reading the references in the book will be masculine. For our left handed brethren who suffer the mirror image of this problem, I realize that some transposition will be necessary.

To use this book most effectively you have to do more than just want to stop slicing. You have to make the commitment to work at it step by step. To learn any physical skill or action takes practice. If you are

willing to work to understand and cure the slice there is no better tool than this book to help you.

I have tried to reiterate certain key points in various forms in the book. I have done this to emphasize those key points and to make information easier to find when you need it. Also, I have included a glossary (Appendix C) and an index.

To be effective you must take the book out to the range and practice each skill! Physical skills require many repetitions before they are mastered. Record the results of your practice sessions in the practice plan section in Appendix B. Recording your progress will help you greatly in the future, when you have a relapse and slice a few. It will be an important record of what things worked for you and it will speed your return to a good game. Keep the book in your golf bag or where is easy to find so you can bring it with you to the practice range to review the drills and record your progress. There is no magic cure for the slice. You will need to practice to overcome whatever faults are causing your slice. The goal of this book is to make your practice worthwhile. The only magic move is the first step you take to the practice range.

While curing your slice you may at first hit shots even worse than before. That's normal and it's something most people will experience. It will be tempting to go back and do things the "old way," so you can make the shot a little bit better immediately. Don't! Don't give up! If you persevere, focusing on developing your new skills, and most important, practicing those new skills, your efforts will be rewarded for many years in the future.

Chapter one will explain the basics of the slice and test your knowledge of the slice. Chapter Two will begin the actual step-by-step program to cure your slice. The first five steps will be a review the fundamentals of the golf swing. This will help make sure you are starting off properly. If you review your fundamentals first, then follow the seven step program you will cure your slice in a very short time.

Understanding the Physics of the Slice

What is a Slice?

What Types of Slices are there?

The Slice Angle

Slice Facts

Chapter Five

What is a slice?

The slice is a shot that curves frustratingly to the right. It is the most common fault in golf. The slice occurs because the golfer imparts some left to right sidespin to the ball in addition to backspin. This is caused by hitting the ball with the clubface aimed to the right of the direction in which the club is being swung.

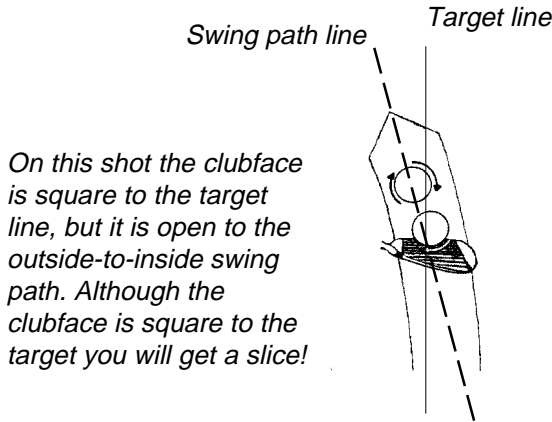


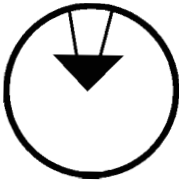
Fig. V-1

The fundamental cause of the slice is the clubface being open at impact. When I say this, I mean the clubface is open to the swing path (the direction the clubhead is traveling). Another way to put it is that your clubface is looking right of the direction in which your clubhead is moving. **Your clubface can be perfectly square toward your target, but if you are cutting across the ball (outside-to-inside), you are going to get a SLICE.** (Fig. 1)

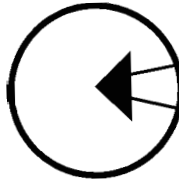
If you cut across the ball and your clubface is square to your swing path you will get a pulled shot to the left. If you swing straight down the target line and your clubface is open (**open to your swing path**), your ball will take off straight and then slice. Your goal during the swing is to have the **clubhead travel straight down the target line** (for the period just before impact, during impact, and just after impact) **with the clubface square.**

Understanding the Slice

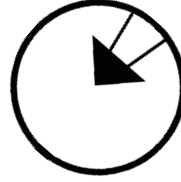
When the ball is struck by a clubface that is open to right, the force imparts a spin to the right (clockwise) to the ball, as well as some backspin. The spinning causes a lower air pressure on one side of the ball. It's like the baseball pitcher intentionally putting sidespin on a pitch to make it curve. The faster he can make it spin when he throws it the sharper the pitch will curve.



*Fig. 5-2A
This shot has
backspin. It will
be a straight
shot which will
create "lift."*



*Fig. 5-2B
This shot has
sidespin but no
backspin, and no
"lift." It will be a
"ground ball."*



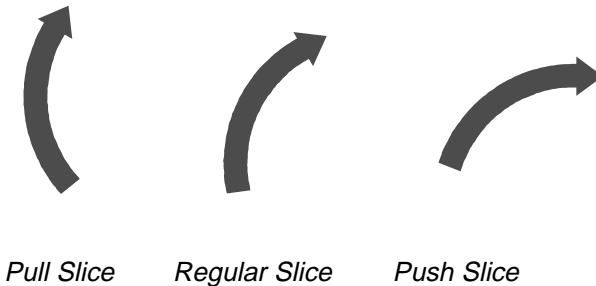
*Fig. 5-2C
This shot has
backspin, which
gives it "lift," and
sidespin which will
make it slice!*

A golf ball spins on every golf shot. The question is, "Which way will it spin?" If it spins straight backwards around a horizontal axis, like a car tire spinning backward (Fig. 2), you'll have a straight shot with backspin, which will help get the ball into the air. If it spins toward the right around a vertical axis (Fig 3) like a merry-go-round, you'll wind up with a ground ball because there is no backspin to create the lift necessary to get the ball up in the air. If you combine backspin and sidespin (Fig 4), you wind up with a slice curving off to the right. Most shots will have a limited amount of side spin. Those will be the fades and draws.

Chapter Five

What type of slices are there?

Fig. V-3



The three basic types of slices.

The Pull Slice starts to the left and then curves back to the right side.

The Regular Slice starts out straight and then curves to the right.

The Push Slice starts to the right and then curves further right.

Which problem to correct first? Swing path or Clubface?

As I have stated before, I believe you will have much greater success working to control the swing path first, because you can measure your progress by viewing your divots or scuff marks on the practice tee. Also you may find the faults that cause the outside-to-inside swing path also create your open clubface position. I believe the outside-to-inside swing is the biggest obstacle to playing good golf that most golfers will ever face. With an outside-to-inside swing, if the clubface is square to the swing path you will have a pull. This is a shot that goes straight left. If on the outside-to-inside swing the clubface is closed (aimed to the left of the swing path), you will have a pull hook that starts to the left and then hooks further left. Finally, if the clubface is open (aimed to the right of the swing path) you will have a pull slice that starts to the left and then slices back to the right. *So when you have an outside-to-inside swing path you can actually be hitting a straight shot (yes, straight left) or a slice or a hook, all of which start to the left.* Work on correcting only one fault at a time or you will become confused and frustrated. After you correct your outside-to-inside swing, you may still slice because of the open clubface. Then when you work on squaring the clubface your slice will be gone.

Understanding The Slice

Slice Angle

The outside-to-inside swing path and the open clubface combine to make the really big slices. The angle the clubface is open to the swing path is called the *Slice Angle*. For example, if you have a straight swing and hit a drive with a 3° open clubface (slice angle of 3°) the ball will wind up about 21 yards off-line to the right. (Fig. 6) This is based on testing done by the Golf Society of Great Britain. If you hit another drive and your clubface is still at 3° open, but this time your swing is 3° off-line from outside-to-inside, your slice will be double (Fig. 6). Your slice angle is 6°, meaning, your clubface is, in total, 6° open from the swing path. This will cause a slice of 42 yards. Because of the outside-to-inside swing path, the ball will take off more to the left so it won't land a full 42 yards to the right. But, even if the shot starts to the left it may not be playable on a narrow fairway. This is the kind of shot where you aim at the trees on the left and hope the ball doesn't go into the trees on the right.

The Slice Angle

The same 3° open clubface can cause a 21 or a 42 yard slice.

Slice Angle 3°

Slice Angle 6°

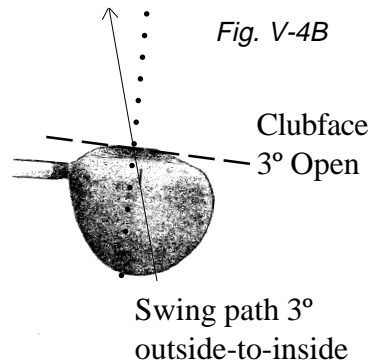
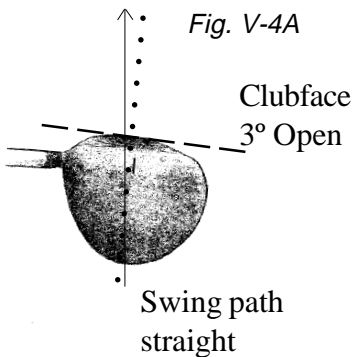


Fig. V-4A - 3° Open clubface with a straight swing path produces a shot that starts straight and then slices 21 yards to the right.

Fig. V-4B - 3° Open clubface with a 3° out-to-in swing path (the clubface is a total of 6° open to the swing path) produces a 42 yard slice that starts to the left.

Chapter Five

Understanding Your “Slice Angle”

Slice Angle

The slice angle is the total angle the clubface is open to the swing path. *The angle the clubface is open to the target and the angle the swing path is from outside-to-inside add together to give you the slice angle.* It is the total of the angle between the swing (swing path) and the face (clubface). This is how a slightly open clubface, which cuts across the ball, can cause a big slice.

$$\text{Slice Angle} = \text{Clubface Angle} + \text{Swing path Angle}$$

Slice Angle Examples

Clubface Angle (° open to target)	Swing path Angle (°outside-to-inside)	SLICE ANGLE (° clubface is open to swing path)	Ball Flight (path of ball)
2° open to target	2° outside-to-inside	4° open	slice
1° open to target	1° outside-to-inside	2° open	pull slice
-2° closed to target	4° outside-to-inside	2° open	pull slice
-2° closed to target	2° outside-to-inside	0°	straight pull
0° (square)	3° outside-to-inside	3° open	pull slice
3° open to target	0° (square)	3° open	slice
0° (square)	1° outside-to-inside	1° open	fade
1° open to target	0° (square)	1° open	fade
4° open to target	-2° inside-to-outside	2° open	push slice
2° open to target	-2° inside-to-outside	0°	straight push

(See also Fig. V-4A and Fig. V-4B)

Understanding the Slice

You can slice if you have a perfectly straight swing path. Even if you have an inside-to-outside swing path you can still slice. The key is the position of the clubface in relation to the swing path, the slice angle. If your swing path is perfectly straight to the target, but your clubface is open you will slice. If you swing inside-to-outside and your clubface is open to your swing path you will slice (called a push slice). Check the scuff marks on the sole of your clubs. If they are diagonal, they are showing your slice angle.

For example, on a drive, if the angle was 10° (meaning the clubface was open 10° to the swing path), you're going to have a severe slice, no matter what the swing path. The angle the clubface is open to the swing path determines how much the ball slices. In addition, the greater the speed of the clubface at impact, the greater the spin, therefore the bigger the slice. The biggest hitters hit the biggest slices.

The Rule of Seven

Cochran and Stobbs in *The Search for the Perfect Swing*¹ found that at 200 yards a drive would slice approximately 7-8 yards for every degree the clubface was open to the swing path. This could vary slightly depending on the loft, clubhead speed and type of ball.

You will slice more with your driver and long irons because you hit them the hardest and they have the least amount of loft. This means they put less backspin on the ball, and more sidespin, than any of the other clubs. Because you "Drive" on 12 to 14 holes per round, a slice can get you off to a bad start, on most of holes.

Another problem for slicers is lose of distance. Distance is lost because of the curving flight of the ball. Also, when the clubface opens the loft of the club is increased. Go get a club and address the ball. Twist the shaft to the right, opening the clubface and watch the loft increase. Opening the club actually tilts the clubface backward increasing the effective loft. The result is weak, high shots landing short of the target.

1. Testing done by the Golf Society of Great Britain. Published in *The Search for the Perfect Swing* by Cochran and Stobbs, page 6.

Chapter Five

The first step to curing the slice is to understand the real causes. Sometimes this will contradict long held beliefs which were considered gospel in their day. Your instincts may tell you to help push the ball with the right shoulder and try to pull it over to the left. Or you may aim a little to the left. Unfortunately these remedies result in a pull or an even bigger slice. It seems contradictory, but the only remedy for the slice will be to go against your natural impulses. You have to learn to swing toward the slice (inside-square-inside) while controlling the clubface. It won't feel right at first, but the only way to improve is to make that leaf of faith.

No matter what the direction of the swing path, remember the amount of the slice is a function of the angle between the direction the clubhead is traveling (swing path) and angle of the open clubface. I refer to this angle as the slice angle. The greater the slice angle the greater the slice. You must understand that to cure the slice, you will need to control both the swing path and the angle of the clubface at impact.

Understanding the Slice

Slice Effects¹

1° Off-line Swing path vs. 1° Open Clubface

Swing 1° Off-line = 3 1/2 yards off-line (200 yards from tee)
Open Clubface 1° = 7-8 yards off-line (200 yards from tee)

For every 1° the swing is off-line, the push or pull will be 3 1/2 yards from the intended line of flight at 200 yards from the tee. However, if the clubface is one degree open at 200 yards the ball will wind up 7-8 yards off-line.

Sample Spin Rate for varying clubs

Club	Launch Angle	Speed	Spin Rate
10° Driver	8°	134 mph	60 rps
30° Five Iron	23°	105 mph	120 rps
45° Nine Iron	29°	90 mph	180 rps

Note: The more backspin there is the less sidespin there will be, therefore the less the shot will slice. Spin rates can vary depending on clubhead speed and ball type.

Headwind and Tailwind Effects on the Slice

(effects at 200 yards from tee)

No Wind = 10 yard slice
Tailwind = 5 yard slice
Strong Headwind= 25 yard slice

This means a golfer can expect that a shot which would hook or slice 10 yards off-line with no wind, will slice only five yards off-line in a strong tailwind. That same shot will slice 25 yards or more off-line when struck into a strong headwind.

Crosswind Effect on the Slice

Crosswind from the right to the left □

A slice into a crosswind from the right will tend to lose distance spinning into the wind. This is because the front of the ball is spinning “into the wind.”

Crosswind from the left to the right □

A slice into a crosswind from the left will gain distance because of reduced aerodynamic drag.

Off Center Hits

An iron hit toward the toe will go right and tends to curve to the right! A wood hit toward the toe will go right and tend to curve a little to the left!

In fact, manufacturers make the face on a wood bulge so a hit on the toe will actually draw just a little and come back to the left. The difference in the center of gravity of woods and iron and the “gear effect” are the cause of the ball flight variations.

1. All results based on testing by the GSGB and published in *The Search for the Perfect Swing*.

Slice Facts

Factors that effect how big your slice will be!

1. Loft of the club

The less lofted the club, the less backspin created, so you'll wind up with more sidespin and more slice. This is the reason a two iron will slice more than a five wood. The five wood has more loft and creates more backspin. The short irons create the most backspin so that's why they are the clubs that are most difficult to slice.

2. Angle of clubface

The more the clubface is open to the swing path at impact the greater the slice.

3. Swing path (path of the clubhead)

An outside-to-inside swing path tends to leave the clubface open creating a slice. The outside-to-inside swing, combined with the clubface being open, can impart large amounts of sidespin to the ball.

4. Clubhead speed

The harder you hit the ball when the clubface is open the more it will slice. This is because the faster the clubhead is traveling the more spin it can put on the ball.

5. Solid hit

Solid hits on the sweet spot may actually slice more. Mis-hitting the ball can cause less of a slice because you impart less force to the ball.

6. Type of ball

Balls with the highest spin rates will slice the most. Avoid the soft covered balls. Look for distance type balls and check out the oversized balls.

Understanding the Slice

Slice Facts

There are only nine ways a golf ball will fly. All shots will be a variation of one of these nine types.

#	Swing path	Clubface	Ball Direction	Descriptive Name
1	Straight	Open	Starts straight-Curves right	SLICE
2	Straight	Square	Starts straight-Goes straight	Straight shot
3	Straight	Closed	Starts straight-Curves left	Regular hook
4	Out-to-in	Open	Starts left-Curves right	PULL SLICE
5	Out-to-in	Square	Starts left-Goes straight (left)	Pull
6	Out-to-in	Closed	Starts left-Curves left	Pull hook
7	In-to-out	Open	Starts right-Curves right	PUSH SLICE
8	In-to-out	Square	Starts rt.-Goes straight (right)	Push
9	In-to-out	Closed	Starts right-Curves left	Push hook

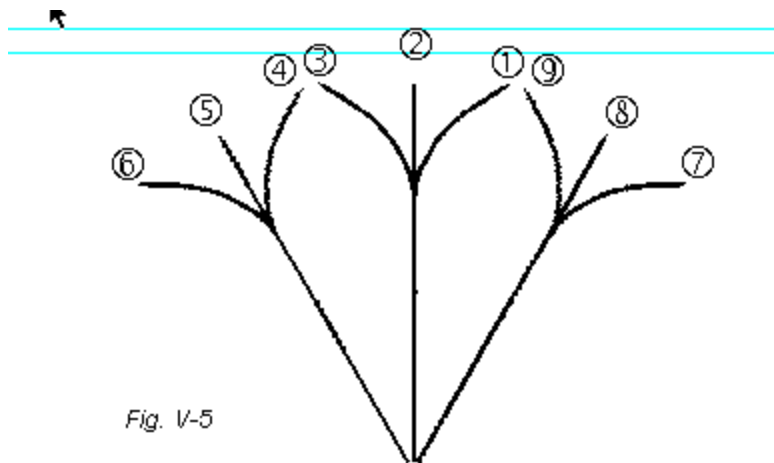


Fig. V-5

Slice Facts

The Science of Spin

Understanding Trajectories and Curves

1. A ball will tend to curve in the direction the front of the ball is spinning. This is why backspin causes lift and gives height to shots. This is why sidespin causes the curving shots known as slices and hooks.

2. The loft of each club puts varying amounts of backspin on the ball. Each clubface is sloped at differing angles. The higher numbered irons and wedges are sloped the most and therefore put the most backspin on a ball. Every shot, except “ground balls” such as putts and mis-hits, puts some backspin on the ball. A ball with backspin tries to curve upward in flight. Gravity tries to bring it down. The ball does carry farther through the air with backspin than it would if it did not spin.

3. Shots which curve (slices and hooks) do so because some sidespin has been created in addition to the backspin. A ball can't spin in two directions simultaneously, so what happens is instead of spinning straight backward, the ball spins partly sideways, and partly backward, so the spin axis is tilted to the side. (See Fig. 4) The more backspin on a ball the less influence the sidespin will have. This is why it's easy to slice a drive and tough to slice a wedge. You can hit your wedge with the clubface open 5° , which would cause a big slice with a driver, and you will hardly notice any effect on the wedge shot.

Understanding the Slice

Summary

The open clubface (“open” to the swing path) is the actual cause of every slice. But it’s the outside-to-inside swing that adds complexity and causes golfers the most grief. The open clubface and the outside-to-inside swing combine to make the big slices.

I believe the most effective way to cure your slice is to cure the two factors causing your slice. Don’t think in terms of curing the slice as taking only one step. Think of it as a problem that has two steps in the solution. Curing the inside-to-outside swing is more measurable, so work on that first. You can see the changes in your swing path by looking at your divots or scuff marks on the practice mat. Then work on squaring the clubface.

The angle between the direction the clubface is aimed at impact and the direction of the swing is called the slice angle. The bigger the slice angle, the bigger the slice.

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Tell us about your slicing experiences

If you have any suggestions or comments about this book I would love to hear from you. What has and hasn't worked for you and why, if you know? Tell us about your successes and failures curing your slice. Any funny slicing stories? Any new drills that work for you? Any new swing keys? Would you recommend any specific products for slicers? All stories, drills, or suggestions used in future editions will be fully credited and acknowledged. Thank you and good golfing! Send to: The Slice Doctor, 26 Maplewood Drive, Danbury, CT 06811-4211 or email slicedoctor@golfhelp.com.

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