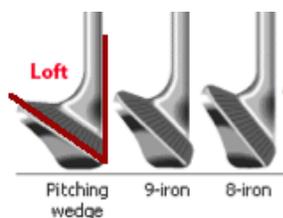


## Better Scoring Through Proper Gapping of Your Wedges

Ever wonder why you have awkward distances in your approach shots with your wedges? This month's article from our professional instructional staff answers that question by explaining what gapping your wedges means and providing suggestions for remedying your problems. Fine tune your wedge set with proper knowledge of how your wedges work!

To understand gapping, one must first understand loft, the angle that the clubface is set back from the vertical shaft.



The progression of lofts throughout a set of irons creates a corresponding progression of distances that each iron will hit the ball. This is referred to as gapping.

As late as 2000, the standard loft of a pitching wedge was 48 degrees; the 9 iron was 44 degrees; and the rest of the set proceeded at gaps of 4 degrees. As shown in the chart below, the sand wedge was 56 degrees, allowing for a gap wedge to be inserted at 52 degrees. The result was a perfectly spaced 4-degree gap between loft of wedges and a natural progression of distances for the golfer.

	Before 2000	2016 (Alternative 1)	2016 (Alternative 2)	2016 (Alternative 3)
9 Iron	44	40	40	40
PW	48	44	44	44
<b>Super Gap</b>				48
Gap Wedge	52	50	48	52
Sand Wedge	56	56	54	56
Lob Wedge	60	60	58	60

In the last decade and a half, however, manufacturers have responded to the golfer's demand for distance by improving clubface design AND de-lofting of clubs of all sets but in particular the mid-level game improvement sets that most players use. I am sure that you have heard someone say, "I can't believe how far I hit my pitching wedge." Of course not, look at the chart. The modern pitching wedge is a 9 iron with a "P" stamped on it.

The chart above shows three gapping options for wedges with a modern set of irons. Notice that in the most commonly recommended solution, Alternative 1, the gap wedge is decreased from 52 to 50 degrees of loft resulting in 6-degree gapping between the pitching wedge, gap wedge, and sand wedge. A solution to achieving a closer gapping is Alternative 2, in which the gap wedge, sand wedge, and lob wedge lofts are decreased. A third option is

Alternative 3, which inserts a "Super Gap" wedge between the gap and pitching wedge and results in the identical gapping of a late 1990s set of irons.

Which solution is best for you? The answer to that question is to observe how often you say that you are "in between clubs" in your wedge shots. If you say that too often, closer gapping may be the solution for you.

And what about the question of how much bounce to your wedges should have? Next month's article will answer that question.

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