



If you tend to hit the top of the ball with your fairway woods, it's because you're hitting the ball on the upswing, often caused by trying to scoop or lift the ball up. To fix this problem, you have to understand that to hit the ball solid in the center is sometimes a game of opposites. To make the ball go higher with a fairway wood, you actually have to hit down—as opposed to up—on the ball.

To eliminate “topping” the ball with your fairway woods and hybrids, start by making sure that your ball position is no farther forward than the inside of your left heel. The ball should be positioned at the base of your swing arc so the club makes contact with the ball at the lowest point of your swing. If you're going to error, you're better off hitting the ball with a downward blow than an upward blow, so make sure the ball is never too far forward. Despite what you may have heard, moving the ball back in your stance can help you hit it higher by imparting more backspin to the ball. More backspin equals a higher trajectory and also works to negate damaging sidespin.

To practice, begin by putting a tee in the ground where you normally would hit your fairway wood. Instead of hitting from that tee, place another tee—this time with a ball—two inches behind the empty tee in front. As you hit a few shots, focus on grazing the empty tee after you make contact with the ball. This drill will help you train yourself to hit the ball on a descending or level plane, as opposed to an upward, ascending arc.

In addition, give this drill a try with your hybrid clubs, irons and wedges—all clubs that require a downward-to-level blow for consistent contact. With your hybrid clubs, separate the tees one to two inches apart, and with your irons and wedges, an inch apart will do just fine. After a few practice sessions, the topped shot will make its way out of your repertoire.

