



HACIENDA PINILLA  
GOLF CLUB

### Golf Tips

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#### Golf Tip – Bunkers

I like to think that I am a good bunker player and sometimes feel more comfortable in the sand than I do out of it. Like many other parts of your game, confidence can really help the game. I have worked hard over the years perfecting my technique as well as understanding and reading the sand. First, look at the sand to see if it is wet, dry, firm, or soft. You can also use your feet when you step into the bunker to determine what type of sand you will be playing from. By rule, you are not allowed to test the sand, but you can take your stance fairly, which means kicking the sand a little bit and getting your feet planted firmly. If your feet sink in easily, you are probably in softer sand and if they stay on top you know you have a firm lie. This is important when determining what type of shot you will hit, what club to select, and how hard you will hit it. I like to use my 60 degree wedge for most bunker shots unless I am trying to get more roll. Set up with the ball forward with a slightly open stance and club face. Most of your weight should be on your left foot. Pick the club up quickly and drop it behind the ball thumping the sand. I use my club face and swing length to determine how far the ball will carry and how high it will go. A softer and steeper swing is better for firm lies. Make bunkers a strength in your game and not a weakness by practicing this 1 or 2 times per week.

#### Golf Tip - Weather

The weather plays a major factor when figuring yardages at Hacienda Pinilla Golf Club in Costa Rica. You could say it does at most places, but in Costa Rica in a dry tropical rain forest, you have to adjust to the conditions you are given. Since it is October and we are at the end of rainy season, I will describe the conditions now. At sea level, with heavy air and wet conditions, I always figure in at least 1 club more than my normal yardage. Many times we forget where we are playing or let our ego get into the way of our club selection. For example, if I am 150 yards in dry season, I pull my 9 iron with no question, but this time of year I may hit as much as a 7 iron. I really try to get a feel of what direction the wind is blowing, how heavy the air is and am I going up or down hill. I find that when you are going down hill this time of year, it is not much of a factor, but a slight up hill can make a difference in a half or 1 club more. The same can be said about a 5 – 7 mph wind. I have taken up to 1 and a half clubs into a wind like this, but rarely go down a club when going with a wind at this speed. Always try to pay attention to the environment you are in, the wind conditions, and the lay of the land. Hit a few balls on the practice tee and see how far you are hitting your clubs. This will help you select the right club to find the middle of the green and lower your scores.

#### Golf Tip – Putting Drills

Use these two putting drills to improve your putting and make more putts. Practice using only the right hand. This allows to the putter head to move back and through mostly by its own weight and gives her the sense that the putter is releasing through impact. As another drill, practice from various distances without trying to hole the putt, without even looking at the target. The goal is to simply strike it on the sweet spot. It will help you free up the stroke and eventually lead to making more putts.