

A GUIDE TO HOW TO RAKE A BUNKER

Find the Best Entry and Exit Point



Locate the lowest spot around the edge of the bunker that is convenient to your ball. This will be your entry and exit point. Identifying this spot keeps you from walking down a steep facing (possibly damaging the turf), stepping off a higher rim (leaving deeper footprints), or having to walk a longer distance which would require raking a greater area of sand.

Enter the Bunker with Rake



Once you've identified the most convenient low spot from which to enter and exit ... enter! Notice that the player in the photo is carrying the rake into the bunker with him. Contrary to what some golfers believe, it is not only within the rules to take a rake into the bunker with you, it is advisable to do so because it speeds up the process.

Play Your Shot



Play the shot. Notice that the player has dropped the rake directly behind the area where he has taken his stance. You should drop the rake at a convenient spot, within reaching distance. Otherwise, in retrieving the rake, you'll just add more area of sand that needs to be tended.

Smooth Over the Sand as You Back Out of the Bunker



Begin raking over the signs of play from the sand - the area where your club made contact with the sand, and your footprints. Pull the tines of the rake toward you as you begin moving back to the rim of the bunker. **But be careful not to pull too much sand toward you.** The idea is to restore an even surface to the sand without displacing too much sand. If you are pulling too much sand toward you, try pushing the tines outward a few times, too. All the while, you should be progressing back to the edge of the bunker.

Exit the Bunker and Complete Raking



To complete the raking, step out of the bunker and make your final few passes over the sand with the rake. Unless otherwise instructed, replace the rake outside the bunker parallel to the line of play. When you are finished, the sand's surface should be evened out, with no signs of divots or footprints, and no excess sand having been pulled toward the bunker's edge. There *will* be little furrows left from the tines of the rake. The important thing is that the sand be in as good or better condition than that which you found it in. Make sure golfers following behind you have a good quality bunker from which to play any necessary sand shots.

WHERE TO PUT THE BUNKER RAKE?

Question: Should the Rake Be Placed Inside or Outside the Bunker?

Answer: When you're finished raking a bunker, what do you do with the rake? Do you place it inside or outside the bunker? Are there rules or guidelines that govern the placement of rakes?

It's a common question among golfers, because no matter where you place that rake - inside or outside the bunker - it will still be in a position to influence golf balls rolling its way. So what's the rule? Well, there is no rule, which, of course, is what leads to the confusion. Although in Decision Misc./2 (see the Miscellaneous Decisions section of The Rules of Golf and the Decisions on the Rules of Golf on usga.com), the USGA does state, "Ultimately, it is a matter for the Committee to decide where it wishes rakes to be placed."

It's likely that your golf club or course has such a decision in place, so the first thing to do is to ask the golf course for its policy on rake placement. If they have one, then simply follow that policy. And if the course does not have a policy, or you are unable to find anyone who knows what it is? While there aren't any official rules about rake placement, there are rules of thumb and guidelines provided by the USGA in Decision Misc./2.

The USGA states in that decision:

"There is not a perfect answer for the position of rakes, but on balance it is felt there is less likelihood of an advantage or disadvantage to the player if rakes are placed outside of bunkers."

True, a rake placed outside a bunker might cause a ball to careen into the bunker, while a rake that is already in the bunker might cause a ball to careen out of the bunker. More likely, though, when a rake inside a bunker influences the ball, is the possibility that the ball will come to rest against (or even on top of, if its teeth are pointing up) the rake.

Continuing with Decision Misc./2:

"It may be argued that there is more likelihood of a ball being deflected into or kept out of a bunker if the rake is placed outside the bunker. It could also be argued that if the rake is in the bunker it is most unlikely that the ball will be deflected out of the bunker.

"However, in practice, players who leave rakes in bunkers frequently leave them at the side which tends to stop a ball rolling into the flat part of the bunker, resulting in a much more difficult shot than would otherwise have been the case. This is most prevalent at a course where the bunkers are small. When the ball comes to rest on or against a rake in the bunker and the player must proceed under [Rule 24-1](#), it may not be possible to replace the ball on the same spot or find a spot in the bunker which is not nearer the hole - see Decision 20-3d/2."

But what about placing the rakes in the middle of the bunker, where they won't be able to stop a ball on the bunker's sloping sides?

Decision Misc./2:

"If rakes are left in the middle of the bunker the only way to position them is to throw them into the bunker and this causes damage to the surface. Also, if a rake is in the middle of a large bunker it is either not used or the player is obliged to rake a large area of the bunker resulting in unnecessary delay.

"Therefore, after considering all these aspects, it is recommended that rakes should be left outside bunkers in areas where they are least likely to affect the movement of the ball."

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America further recommends that rakes outside the bunker be placed laying flat on the ground (tines up) and parallel to the hole's direction of play.

So: Follow the guidelines in place at the golf course or in place for your tournament. If such guidelines are not in place, or you are unable to learn what they are, then place rakes outside bunkers, parallel to the direction of play on that hole.