

## Flexibility, Strength and the Golf Swing

**Improved consistency and scoring is a universal goal in the game of golf. One sure way to improve these is to develop a repeatable, more reliable swing. Lessons, practice and more lessons are priceless, but the golf swing also requires sufficient physical abilities. Optimal flexibility and strength promote a more efficient, balanced and coordinated swing which in turn results in more consistent ball striking and helps build a more repeatable swing. Better scores will follow. Proper conditioning also enables you to take full advantage of your lessons, your time spent on the range and will reduce the risk of injury.**

### Flexibility

Although golf is a sport that is generally not considered strenuous, sufficient range of motion or flexibility is necessary. Optimal flexibility promotes an efficient swing by reducing restrictions among the moving parts. Restriction among *any* of the 'links' that make up the 'kinetic chain' that is our body promotes compensation. Compensation adds stress to the many joints, muscles and connective tissue involved and includes those of the neck and back, shoulders, wrists, hands, hips and knees. Compensations add stress to areas above and below the restriction and eventually causes injury. For example, restricted hip rotation leads to excessive compensatory motion in the spine and shoulders. Restricted movement and compensations also promote inconsistencies in our swing which result in any number of faults and miss hits. Adequate flexibility promotes a more efficient golf swing and reduces your risk of injury.

### Strength

Strength is important to the golfer for many reasons: yes, strong muscles, tendons, and ligaments help keep us injury free by improving our body's ability to absorb and distribute the stress of the golf swing. But strength also provides stability while contributing to coordination, endurance and power. Strength in our legs, hips, trunk, shoulders and arms, (links that connect our kinetic chain) provide a stable base of support for each succeeding segment to work from. This allows the forces we generate throughout the golf swing to be transferred through each link to the club head and golf ball in a more efficient and coordinated manner. Improved efficiency yields greater power with less effort and less stress on the body. Core strength (strength in our trunk and hips) is important because it provides the foundation for the extremities to move on while also allowing for efficient energy transfer. The more stable and efficient our trunk and hips, the more efficient our extremities are. **It doesn't matter how fast you can swing a golf club if the foundation on which you are swinging is not stable enough to control the path of the golf club.**

### Posture

Flexibility and strength also provide the ability to *maintain proper posture* and spinal alignment. The ability to maintain your posture throughout the swing is one of the keys to a more repeatable swing and consistent ball striking. Postural strength and stability, combined with leg, hip and trunk strength, allows for a more reliable axis of rotation throughout the golf swing which in turn allows for more precise coordination of the legs and arms with our core. Good posture is also less stressful on your spine and back muscles. The inability to maintain your address posture throughout the swing will result in any number of swing faults and miss hits and possible injury.

### Balance

With club head speeds averaging 70-110 mph, the golf swing is a very dynamic movement. Good balance promotes crisp ball contact by preventing excessive movement such as hip slide or sway. In order to be most efficient and consistent, we need to maintain our balance throughout the swing. Adequate flexibility and proper strength training that includes balance training will contribute to a more balanced swing.

### Endurance

Proper conditioning also improves our muscular endurance which delays the onset of fatigue. Fatigue in one or more links within a chain or segment can lead to any number of faults such as loss of posture, coordination, balance and timing. This is obviously not conducive to an efficient or reliable swing and leaves us more vulnerable to injury.

### Injury prevention

All of the above reduces the risk of injury and promotes a more efficient, consistent and repeatable golf swing. Of the hundreds of training devices on the market today, not one is more effective at improving your ability to play the game of golf better than your own body. It's never too late to start a flexibility and strength training program.

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