

## Core Strength May Be the Core of Your Golf Game

By Chris Kendall, MPT and Betsy Voyles, MSPT

**W**hat is it going to take to play your best golf next season?

Buy new golf clubs with the latest technology? Take golf lessons from a well-respected teaching professional? Learn how you can perform better mentally on the course? Go out to the driving range and practice more? Learn how to get your body in condition to play your best and safest golf?

The answer to playing your best golf is to successfully integrate all of these performance factors into your game. Without concentrating on each of these factors, you will not play to your ultimate potential.

Although all of these factors are critical to performance, we are going to focus on how the condition of your body is directly related to your golf swing, and subsequently, to your golf scores. There are many physical factors which must be considered with golf, including strength, flexibility, posture, balance, and control.

Golfers must have sufficient core

strength to play effectively and reduce the chances of injury. The core muscle groups that must be well conditioned for a sound golf swing include the lower abdominals, the side stomach muscles (obliques), the gluteals, and the muscles surrounding the shoulder blades. One of the main problems with many golfers stems from poor strength and poor endurance in these core muscles. Each of these muscle groups must be strong so that the rotational forces that are produced during the swing do not cause joint or muscle injury. The lower back is the most common body part injured during golf and the main reason for this is due a lack of core strength. It's like the

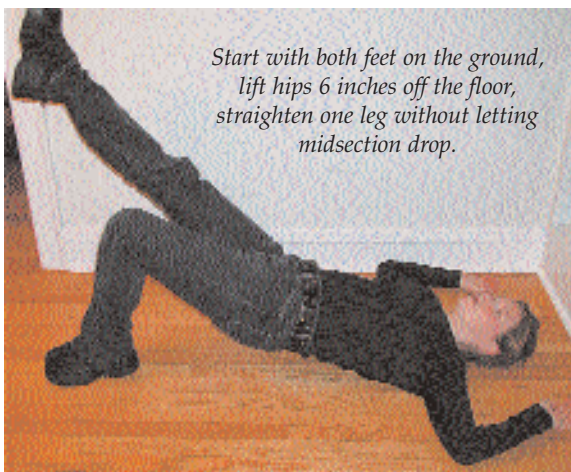


*Start with back rolled-out over ball as shown, curl upper torso upward with slight rotation to one side. Arms can be across the chest.*

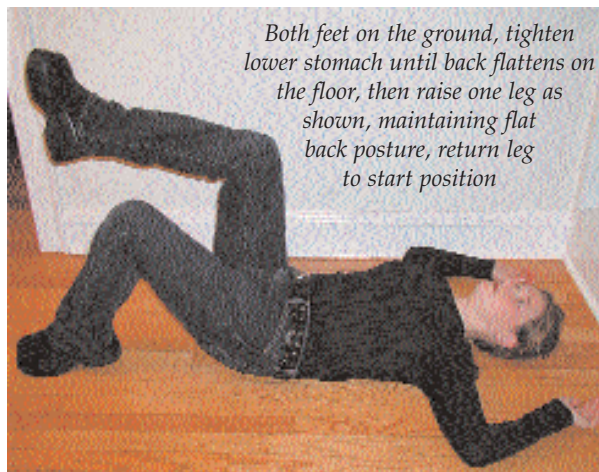
saying “the tail wags the dog”. Golfers must achieve a higher level of core strength so that they can swing the club, not allowing the club to swing them!

Studies have shown that amateur golfers use approximately 90% of their

peak muscle activity when hitting a golf ball. This type of muscle activation can be compared to other sporting activities such as football and tennis. The main difference between golf and these other sports is the sport-specific training the athletes endure in

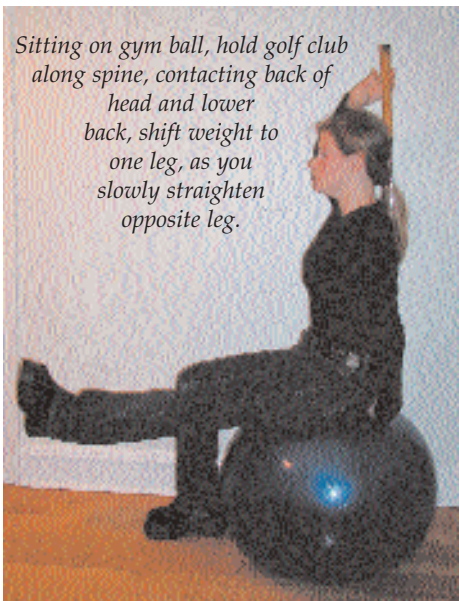


*Start with both feet on the ground, lift hips 6 inches off the floor, straighten one leg without letting midsection drop.*



*Both feet on the ground, tighten lower stomach until back flattens on the floor, then raise one leg as shown, maintaining flat back posture, return leg to start position*

*Sitting on gym ball, hold golf club along spine, contacting back of head and lower back, shift weight to one leg, as you slowly straighten opposite leg.*



these other sports. Golfers are just beginning to realize that performance and longevity are directly linked to sport-specific conditioning. If golfers are not conditioning specifically for the sport and they are producing these substantial forces over and over again swinging the club, guess what happens? Due to the lack of strength in the core region, they become much more susceptible to injuries. In addition, there will typically be major inconsistencies in their game because these core muscles do not have the strength and endurance to produce a consistent, repeating swing.


If you have ever watched the golfers on the long drive circuit you will see that they have tremendous strength throughout the body, especially in the core region. They dedicate themselves to golf-specific fitness training because they realize that the stronger they are, the more powerful and consistent they will be.

We have included a number of exercises that will help you begin to strengthen some of your core muscles. These exercises should be performed slowly while maintaining a smooth breathing pattern.

If you would like to maximize each golf lesson with your teaching professional, hit that new titanium rocket-ship

driver long and straight, and avoid a golf-related injury, then you need to seriously consider a customized golf-specific training program!

Call Body Balance for Performance, the complete golf, health and fitness training program if you have any questions about the exercises or to

schedule a comprehensive golf fitness evaluation (312) 455-9691 or (847) 441-8799. The evaluation includes a comprehensive physical assessment, video swing analysis, and goal setting to develop optimal core strength and to begin your road to true Body Balance. 

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