

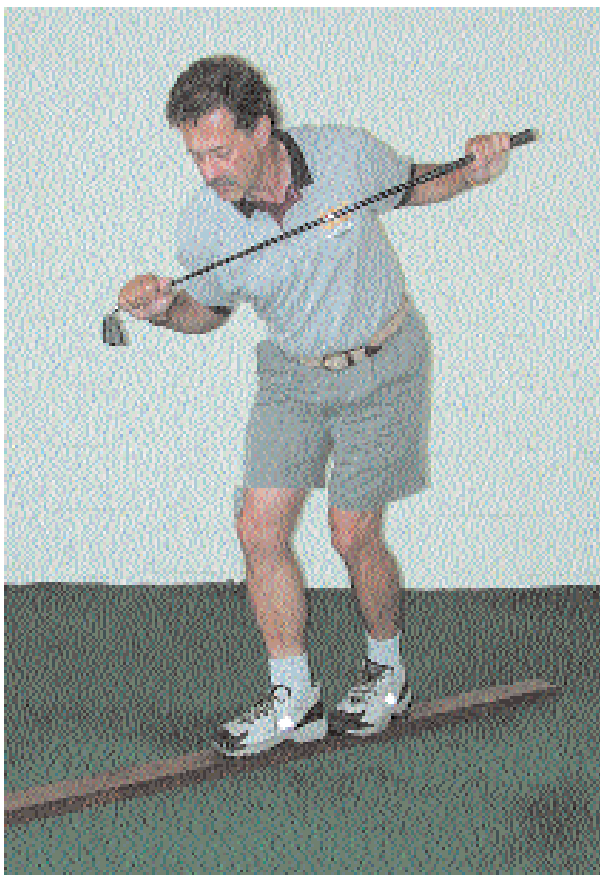
Is Your Golf Game Balanced?

By Chris Kendall, MPT and Betsy Voyles, MSPT

One of the main ingredients to a truly consistent and repeatable golf swing is having great balance. Most golfers think they have adequate balance if they do not fall down on the ground after hitting a shot. But having true body balance is difficult to achieve and can only be improved with different types of balance training. Balance cannot be taught, it can only be trained. Many swing flaws, as we will discuss, are directly related to poor balance. In order to play your absolute best golf, you must have solid static and dynamic balance.

Static balance is the ability to remain in one position in good postural alignment, without deviation, for an extended period of time. In golf, we must have good static balance so that we can maintain a consistent posture over the ball at address. If our weight is not centered during address then compensations will lead to inconsistent swings and poor results. This game is hard enough when our objective is to make solid contact between a small club head and an even smaller ball! So when there is a balance deficit this objective will become even more difficult.

Dynamic balance for golf is the ability to maintain good postural alignment and stability throughout the entire swing. Good dynamic balance can only be achieved with the proper blend of strength, flexibility, coordination, and movement awareness



throughout the entire body. While swinging you should be able to sense where all of your joints are in space with your eyes open or closed. Improving this awareness is critical for golf to allow the body to swing in a safe, repeatable, and balanced manner.

Now that you know what balance means and why it is so important during golf, let's have you do a few tests to check your own balance.

Postural sway test: Stand with your feet together and your eyes closed. Notice if your body has a tendency to drift or sway in any particular direction (forward, backward, right, or left)? Do

you feel that one leg is bearing more weight than the other?

Single leg stance test eyes open: Stand on one leg with the other leg up in front of you like you are marching. Try holding this position for 30 seconds. Switch legs. Was one leg easier than the other?

Single leg stance eyes closed: Stand on one leg at a time as above, and then close your eyes. Was this more difficult than the eyes open test? Most people find that it is more difficult to balance with their eyes closed because they rely heavily on vision for balance. This again has to do with training the body to have good spatial and movement awareness. Try holding this position for 30 seconds.

Tightrope stance: Stand with one foot in front of the other as if on a tightrope. Now try to rotate your upper body slowly right and left a few times. Then try the other foot forward. Were you able to perform the turns without losing your balance? Was one direction easier than the other?

So, how did you do? Were you rock solid with every test or did you feel challenged with any test? Everybody can work on improving balance. There is no such thing as being too balanced! The best way to begin training your balance is to use these tests as the training exercises.

Single leg stance: Work up to two minutes on each leg with eyes open and then eyes closed without loss of balance. A progression for this exercise, which incorporates static and

dynamic balance, is to try hitting balls on one leg with your eyes closed without loss of balance.

Tightrope stance: A great high-tech balance training tool that is probably sitting in your basement is a 2x4 board that can be used with this next exercise. Stand on the 2x4 like on a tightrope, feet touching heel to toe, and your weight evenly distributed through your feet.

Start initially standing for two minutes, and then progress to standing as in your address position while rotating your upper body right and left holding a club across your chest (see photo on preceding page). You should keep the club in contact with your chest throughout the movement.

This drill is great for training your body to stop swaying, sliding, and reverse pivoting. If you commit any of these swing flaws while rotating on the 2x4 then you will knock yourself off the board. You should work up to two minutes performing rotations with your eyes open and then eyes closed.

You can achieve dramatic increases in your golf swing accuracy, consistency, and control by improving your static and dynamic balance with these exercises. As we have discussed, achieving optimal balance is critical to being able to play your best golf. You should strive to reach true body balance for optimal performance. Call Body Balance for Performance at (312) 455-9691 or (847) 441-8799 if you have any golf fitness questions or if you would like more information about our customized golf-specific exercise programs.

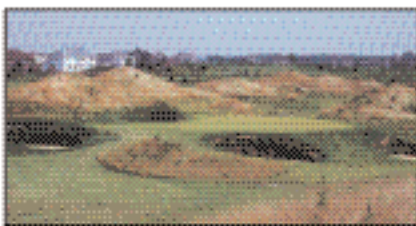


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