

## Your Golf Fitness Forum

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The Complete Golf, Health and Fitness Training Program

**W**e get asked a lot of questions about fitness and golf and how the two come together to produce a better player. Many of those questions are similar and we thought this issue's department ought to be dedicated to answering those questions. Here we go.

**Q:** Why do so many golfers have an over-the-top move in their downswing?

**A:** The underlying cause of most over-the-top moves can be traced back to poor spine angle at the set-up and/or poor mid-spine rotational flexibility. If a golfer addresses the ball with a rounded, slouched posture, then it will be very difficult to turn or coil the body correctly in the backswing. Without the correct coil in the backswing, the golfer usually will over-swing or move the arms very deep to the chest in the backswing. When the arms are too far behind the chest at the top, the golfer almost always has to move the back shoulder forward to swing the club, instead of being able to "drop in the slot," or swing the club on an inside to outside swing plane. This most often will cause slicing or snap hooks.

**Q:** What is the most common injury that we see with golfers?

**A:** The most common injury that we treat is lower back pain. Unfortunately, most golfers you see on the driving range address the golf ball with poor posture including the rounded, slouched posture discussed above. From this inefficient position, the mid-spine is not allowed to fully rotate into the backswing. This mid-spine region between your shoulder blades is anatomically designed to produce approximately 90% of the spine's rotation. When this part of the spine is excessively rounded forward it cannot produce the correct amount of rotation needed in the swing. The lower back is then recruited to help complete the turn. This is where the problem exists because the lower spine is not designed to rotate; it is designed to bend backward and forward. The lower back often develops strain when golfers repeatedly make this incorrect, torque generating force.

Tight hamstrings and hip rotators are also a very common problem that can often lead to low back strain. If the hips are not moving well, the low back tends to take over; i.e. bending straight over to tee up the ball rather than squatting down to do it.

**Q:** Why are so many professional golfers now working out specifically for golf?

**A:** Professional golfers are following the lead taken by Tiger Woods who decided to truly treat golf like the sport that it is. Because of Tiger getting his body in the best possible golf condition, he has definitely raised the bar in terms of players realizing that the stronger and more flexible they become, the better they will consistently play. He also knows that this also minimizes his risk of injury. Studies have shown that during a full speed golf swing a golfer's muscles reach a 90% peak contraction force. This is some serious force being generated! Working out for golf is a relatively new concept, but the results from a golf-specific conditioning program are un-

arguable—improved flexibility, muscle strength, postural endurance, and balance will increase distance, consistency, accuracy, and reduce the risk of injury. Unfortunately, even most touring pros do not start a specific training program until they get injured.

**Q:** Why is it so important to have the back straight in the address position like almost all of the new professional golfers that are playing on the PGA Tour?

**A:** This athletic position with the back straight and shoulders pulled back is crucial to being able to make a good solid swing without placing extra pressure on the low back. From this good address position, the feeling should really be hinging forward from the hip joints, not squatting, while maintaining your back relatively straight. You can practice this by holding a club flush along your spine; it should touch the back of your head, the spine between the shoulder blades, and just above the low back. With the knees

*“Unfortunately, even most touring pros do not start a specific training program until they get injured”.*

locked, work on hinging forward from your hip joints into your address position, keeping the club touching all of the above areas. Then simply unhinge or unlock the knees without squatting.

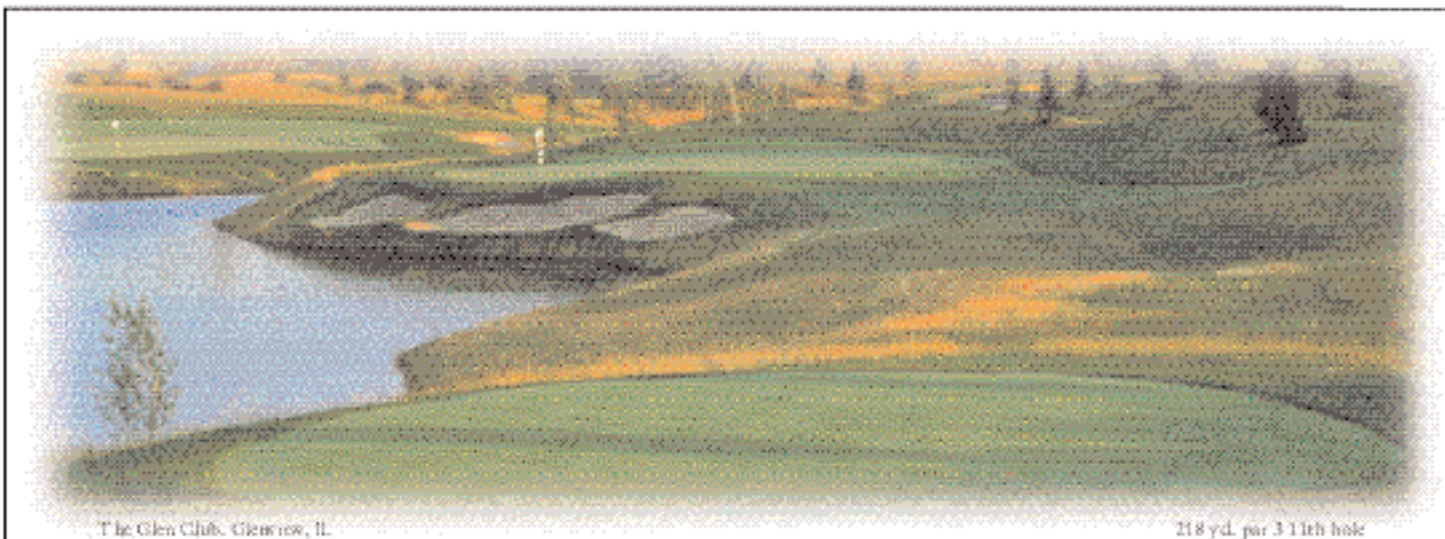
**Q:** Why do I always seem to lose my balance after I finish my swing?

**A:** We frequently see golfers who display poor balance during the golf swing. The main cause of this loss of balance is usually because the golfer does not achieve a true balanced position right from the start: at the address position. If the golfer is not balanced before the swing, there is almost no way to achieve a balanced position during the swing. Every body has a tendency to drift or sway in certain directions, so working on your balance daily can greatly improve your consistency. Trying to hit a very small ball with a small club head on the sweet spot every time is hard enough, but if you have any balance issues, it becomes much harder. We have covered some balance training previously in *Golf Chicago!*. (editor's note: those articles are available at our web site: [www.egolfchicago.com](http://www.egolfchicago.com))

**Q:** In physical terms, what are the main differences in working with men, women, and kids?

**A:** In general, male golfers tend to have more flexibility deficits and women and junior golfers tend to have more strength and stability deficits. Men usually have more trouble achieving the straight back position at address simply because their bodies cannot comfortably and consistently get into this position because of spine and hip stiffness issues. Women and kids frequently have trouble being able to control their swings because they tend not to be strong enough in the trunk and arm muscles. Controlling over-swinging becomes a major issue.

*We hope this question/answer article has been helpful for you. Please call 312-214-9079 or e-mail with other questions that you have. We will answer as many questions as possible. Also call or email us if you would like more information about Body Balance for Performance golf fitness training program. We are dedicated to customizing golf-specific fitness training programs to allow golfers to improve their golf performance while minimizing stress on the body. Until next time, happy golfing!*



The Glen Club, Glenview, IL

218 yd. par 3 11th hole

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