BIOMECHANICAL GOLF CONDITIONING

Flexibility, Golf Performance and Injury Prevention - Part 2

Flexibility and Golf Performance

Poor flexibility and muscle imbalance issues effect the mechanics of the golf swing and can have a negative influence on one or more of the following ball flight factors. Through an inability to get the body in the required position less than optimal swing mechanics are the end result. Further golf practice will only further develop poor motor patterns as the body compensates in the best way it can. The only result this gives is swing inconsistency and poor golfing performance.

- Club face alignment
- Swing plane
- Angle of attack/impact
- Club head speed
- Hitting the sweet spot
- Lateral sway

In contrast, optimal flexibility and muscle balance will help the golfer create a quality motor pattern that can be produced time and time again. Further golf practice and appropriate conditioning will have a positive effect on the above ball flight factors therefore your golf game.

Flexibility and Injury Prevention

Poor flexibility and muscle balance can create any number of overuse or compensatory musculoskeletal injuries. Some examples are outlined below:

Spinal Rotation

Performance
- Restriction in the spine will result in excessive internal shift and rotation of the hips during backswing and follow-through. This can produce any number of swing faults.

Injury Risk
- Lack of coil in the spine can lead to overuse of the shoulders and elbows, leading to golfers elbow.

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Internal and External Hip Rotation (Attach to various areas on the pelvis, sacrum and femur)

Performance
- Limited internal rotation right and external rotation left will limit your backswing. The opposite will limit your follow through.
- This will cause any number of swing faults and loss of distance.

Injury Risk
- Overuse and injury of the back, shoulders, elbows and wrists is a common problem.

Hip Flexors (Attach from the anterior portion of L1-L5 in the lumbar spine, the pelvis, sacrum to the femur)

and *Performance*
- Short hip flexors reduce your ability to achieve a full backswing by reducing your ability to rotate the trunk.
- This results in loss of distance and inability to hit straight shots.

Injury Risk
- Short hip flexors are commonly implicated in lower back pain by causing the hamstrings and lower abdominals to lengthen and the lower back muscle to shorten and tighten in extension.
- Inability to rotate the pelvis and trunk may lead to compensations in the shoulders, elbows and wrists.

Hamstrings (Attach from the pelvis to the femur and tibia/fibula)

Performance
- Short hamstrings affect your address posture and ability to rotate your pelvis.
- Lost distance is a common by product of this.

Injury Risk
- Spine, shoulders, elbows and wrists over compensate for the lack of pelvic rotation in an attempt to maintain club head speed.

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Conclusion

Performance can be significantly inhibited by lack of flexibility and muscle imbalance. Conversely, improvements in a golfer's game can be equally significant if the golfer develops and maintains optimal flexibility and muscle balance.

Overuse injuries of the spine, shoulders, elbows and wrists are often created by lack of flexibility in the hamstrings, hip flexors, hips, chest, shoulders and back. Achievement of optimal flexibility and muscle balance will help ensure ongoing, high quality, injury free golf.

To get 50% off your biomechanical golf conditioning assessment call

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References

Chek, Paul. (1998) Reproduced with permission. **Golf Biomechanic Certification Intensive – Course Manual** A CHEK Institute Publication. Vista, San Deigo, USA.

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