

Improve Your Golf With Flexibility Training



It was once said that elite athletic performance looks like “poetry in motion”. This economy of movement is what we all aspire to in our golf swings – no unwanted movement or wasted effort. Ideal posture and range of movement underpin the ability to move efficiently.

A priority for all budding golf athletes, to achieve this movement efficiency, is an individual assessment or physical musculoskeletal assessment. In this assessment, a golf-trained physiotherapist compares your components of posture, flexibility and stability with “ideals” (academically accepted norms). When combined with a thorough understanding of how you are progressing technically (through communication with your coach if necessary) an individualised exercise program can be implemented to improve the findings and move them closer to ideal. It is important to remember that the development of this process can take many months or years and that the exercise program be accompanied with golf instruction from your coach to make the most of your musculoskeletal changes.

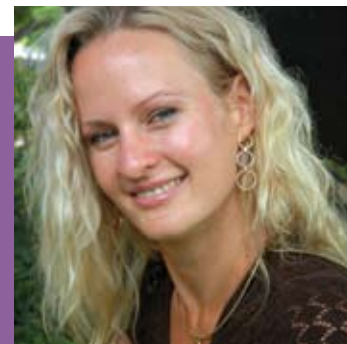
To be a golf athlete an optimal amount of flexibility is essential. All golfers have an idea of how flexible they are. Most are no where near the ideal level. However, all too frequently golfers comment to my physio staff that they have lost distance off the tee and their bodies feel stiff. The two go hand in hand. Swing mechanics (your technique) are determined partly by your flexibility. Many common swing faults are caused by lack of range

of movement, for example too much hip turn in your swing may be due in part to poor upper body flexibility.

A pattern that is ingrained due to poor flexibility takes many hours of repetition to “unlearn” after you have fixed the physical issue through treatment and/or stretching. All golf athletes should have a well-structured, individual set of stretches that are completed most days of the week to ensure optimal range of movement and to prevent an ingrained poor movement pattern occurring.

These stretches should be used as part of your warm up before a round of golf. Recent studies show most golfers do little or no warm up. In addition to those specific stretches, the ideal and recommended comprehensive warm up (and almost the impossible for most players,) should be five or 10 minutes of brisk walking to increase blood flow to the muscles, followed by hitting a minimum of half a bucket of balls. Stretches and exercises should be spaced between every six to 10 shots. Commence with short irons and work your way up to long clubs. This entire process will ensure you are appropriately warmed up ready to play when you get to the first tee. Alternatively, if your time is limited, or you don’t have access to a range, a brisk walk followed by some air swings and a few important stretches will suffice.

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Dare To Live An Extraordinary Life

Imagine you have come to the end of your life. Would you look back on your life with satisfaction, knowing that you:

- made a difference?
- developed loving relationships?
- laughed out loud until your stomach hurt?
- smelled different aromas, felt different textures, saw many colours?
- took risks?
- did what you loved?
- explored and experienced different things?
- lived with purpose?

Or would you look back with regret, wishing you could have lived the life you really wanted? Remember there are only two times in life: now or too late. Choose to live now, that’s what an extraordinary life is – living it now with immense joy and happiness.

Why do you deserve it? Nelson Mandela said we do ourselves an injustice by stepping down. When we step up and live our dreams, we automatically inspire others to live their dreams.

Living an extraordinary life isn’t selfish – it’s about being happy. When you are happy, others are happy. You are infectious when you glow with passion. That quality alone will allow you to make a difference. That’s what life is all about – living with purpose.

How can you achieve it?

1. Be aware. Switch off the autopilot, wake up and look around. Ask yourself, is this how I really want to live my life? If not, explore what you want instead. How? Think of the opposite to what you don’t want – simple.
2. Create a vision. Imagine your ideal life as a movie. You are the producer and have the head role. Include in your movie: location – home and workplace, supporting actors/actresses and theme.
3. Create a powerful action plan. Write a step-by-step plan.
4. Believe in yourself. Take it one step at a time and praise yourself every step of the way.
5. Enjoy the journey. Love yourself and love your life, no matter what.

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