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Golf's Missing Link

By Nancy Jerominski

Droves love the game of golf and it certainly has exercise benefits. But if the golfer is de-conditioned (and many *pros* are, much less the average Joe or Jane) 18 holes of golf can be downright painful. And if they choose to carry their clubs for more exercise instead of driving a cart, they may find themselves right back on the couch they're trying to get off of.

Rotational forces are the most destructive in nature, i.e. tornadoes and hurricanes. Hitting a little white ball at the end of a long club generates enormous rotational forces on the spine if the muscles supporting the spine aren't working properly.

If someone has lousy core and poor posture (I see lots of slumping, pudgy golfers whose umbilicus radiate out when walking or hitting the ball), untargeted flexibility and weight lifting will make faulty recruitment patterns worse. It's important to balance the spinal extensors with the flexors and learn how to properly use the core, particularly rotational movements as well as weight shifting.

Golfers hiring trainers who put together programs with exercises like bicep curls, triceps kickbacks, leg presses or crunches from the floor and jogging won't improve their golf game, no matter the promises.

Nothing in these exercises remotely resembles the game of golf!

Flexibility is important, certainly, but only for the areas of the body that are short and tight. If there are long loose muscles (which then act like floppy rubber bands during a swing), those need to be strengthened to tighten them up a bit.

Balancing the extensors and the flexors of the body are critical for improved performance in any sport. All the lessons in the world won't get you where you want to be until these imbalances are addressed.

A well trained core (which isn't synonymous with "abs") acts like the spokes on a bicycle wheel. What happens if some of those spokes are loose and some are too tight and the person riding takes a jump or hits a bump?

A nice bent wheel.

Hitting that elusive little white ball with a long club rotating at high velocity is a major bump for the spine to deal with. You need functionally strong muscles working to protect the spine from injury. Good



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nutrition is critical for replacing the millions of cells that die every second in the body and to deal with the rotational forces of golf.

“Tight hip flexors limit a golfer’s body in trunk rotation which ultimately leads to compensations at the shoulders, elbows and wrists. It’s important to clearly understand where the chain broke down in the first place so corrective action can be taken.” writes [Susan Hill, CHEK certified Golf Biomechanic](#) and Sports Nutritionist at Sunriver Resort in Oregon.

How to Find and Fix Your Missing Link:

- Hire a good trainer or [CHEK Practitioner](#) who does postural and movement assessments and can show you functional training exercises for your game. You’ll pay more, but it’s worth it.
- Stretch the short tight muscles and strengthen the long loose muscles.
- Stop eating and drinking junk/diet food to lose that belly fat.