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Keep Your Golf Swing In Shape All Year With A Golf Fitness Program

By Sean Cochran

Some PGA Tour players have been playing for a couple of weeks in Hawaii and California. Others

like Vijay and Ernie have been playing on the European Tour. Regardless of how many tournaments the pros have played this year, they have been working on their games for more time than most of us realize. Make no mistake about it: in golf - or baseball, football, basketball or any other pro sport - there is no longer an off-season.

So while this may be the first official shot of the season for some, the training process to get ready to make that shot has been quietly going on for months.

The amateur can learn a great deal from the professional golfer. Many parts of the world it is not possible to play golf year around, but there are ways to keep your golf game in shape all year long. Professionals know how to do it and so can you.

Realistically, there is very little time to take a break and do absolutely nothing for professional golfers. While every pro is different, there is a generic blueprint most will follow. After the pro finishes his last golf tournament, they take a little break. A few weeks off to give the body and mind a little rest. Every pro athlete needs that time to just recharge and give the body - both physically as well as mentally - time to recover. The PGA Tour season is one of the longest in sports and even though they may not play every week, it's very taxing on the body and the time off is essential to ensure positive results when we begin training for the next season.

I would recommend the same recipe for the amateur. Regardless if you are able to play year around or not, take a period of at least 2 weeks to put the golf clubs in the closet. The break away from the game will do wonders. You may even find after you return you are playing better golf and shooting lower scores.

Following the rest time - and like I said, it's longer for some, shorter for others - its time for the tour player to begin ramping up for the next season by physically improving the parameters of the body for the upcoming year. Just like any other golfer - from the Sunday hacker to the scratch golfer to the club pro - the professional golfer will work on trying to increase flexibility, balance, strength, endurance and

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power.

The amateur during this time of the year (usually the winter when snow is on the ground) can implement a golf fitness program. A golf fitness program will entail developing the physical capacities of the body around the golf swing. The program will look to develop flexibility, balance, strength, endurance, and power in relation to the golf swing. This is the first step for the amateur to keeping their golf swing in shape all year long.

The amateur during this time of year can also implement swing drills into their training program. The professional may or may not incorporate swing drills into their program at this time year. But for the amateur I recommend it, why? This is the time of year in addition to developing the body for the golf swing. The amateur can work on swing faults that hindered their scores the previous season.

The swing drills can be simply performing "mirror drills" to work on posture and the phases of the golf swing.

You should start putting drills this time of the year. If you are lucky enough to live in a region you can play golf year around, a couple short sessions at the range every week is a good idea. I would recommend the range sessions be kept short and focused on fixing the "problem" areas in your golf swing. The important point is the off-season is a time the amateur can take advantage of working on both their bodies and their golf swing

Professionally when the PGA Tour season approaches, we begin what is essentially the preseason. This is when the player starts to practice the fundamental mechanics of the sport. If it's a golfer, he's on the range working on his swing, if it's a pitcher, he's throwing getting ready for spring training. Physically, we're still training the body, but we tone it down while the player fine tunes his game. But make no mistake about it, even though working on the golf game is 75 percent of the focus of this pre-season training program, we're still working on the basics of flexibility, balance, strength, endurance and power training.

The pre-season for the amateur marks the time of year when the snow is beginning to melt and the "itch" to play golf comes around. I would suggest the amateur follow a similar program as the professional during this time of year. Start spending more time at the range. Working on all aspects of your golf game. Continue with your golf fitness program, but you may want to back off it a little as a result of the increased practice time. Again, keep in mind the body swings the golf club and we must keep the body in shape to do so.

The pre-season program of increased golf practice and a little less golf fitness continues with the professional golfer until their first tournament. This marks the point when we shift to an in-season golf fitness program. The golf fitness exercises don't stop, but we back off on the intensity. The program doesn't change much. We're still focused on flexibility, balance, strength, endurance and power, but the amount or volume of work is much less to accommodate the physical and mental strain of competition.

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Four days of tournament play can take a toll on the body. As a result, we must back off on the amount of golf fitness training. The amateur during the golf season is probably in a little different of a situation. They are probably not playing 4 competitive rounds of golf per week plus practice. At most, they may be playing 2–3 rounds per week with a couple practice sessions. As a result of the lower volumes of golf they can spend a little more amount of time with their golf fitness program.

Essentially, the amateur can pretty much stick to pre–season volume of golf fitness training unless they are playing quite a bit. Just make sure the right balance of golf fitness training is in place in relation to your golf practice and playing. This is necessary so that you do not physically over–tax the body. Bottom line if you are looking to keep your golf game in shape and improving year around, I recommend following what the pros do; take a break at the end of the season, implement a golf fitness program, work on your swing faults during the winter, increase your practice time at the range before the season, and during the season keep a good balance of playing, practicing, and working out.

Sean Cochran

Sean Cochran is one of the most recognized golf fitness instructors in the world today. He travels the

PGA Tour regularly with 2005 PGA & 2004 Masters Champion Phil Mickelson. He has made many of his golf tips, golf instruction and golf swing improvement techniques available to amateur golfers on the website

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Improve Your Golf Swing By Improving Your Tempo

By Sean Cochran

We have all heard the word tempo in relation to the golf swing. Announcers on television speak of the "great" tempo Ernie Els has in his golf swing. What does tempo mean to the amateur and their golf swing?

Tempo in the Golf Swing

Tempo in the golf swing is a combination of many parts. Tempo is part timing in all aspects of the golf swing. It is part sequencing of each position within the golf swing, and it is part "feel". Putting all these golf swing parts together creates tempo in your own golf swing.

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Interconnecting each phase of the golf swing; address, take-away, backswing, transition, downswing, impact, and follow through is one part of tempo, Performing each of these phases with the correct timing is also tempo. And finally "feel" for the clubhead is part of tempo.

We can probably say tempo is the end goal of all our practice and time spent on our golf swing. Once we have developed tempo in the golf swing, there is definitely a level of mastery within it.

How Do We Develop Tempo in the Golf Swing?

A great question that does not have a simple answer: Developing tempo in the golf swing is a task that requires patience, practice, and time. There really are no short cuts to developing it within your golf swing. One practice session at the driving range will not do it. The use of a single training aide will not get you there. The implementation of a golf fitness program will not achieve this task on its own.

I say this because developing a PGA Tour type golf swing requires a "basket of tools" in your arsenal. Developing tempo and a silky smooth golf swing requires you to:

- § Receive proper instruction on the fundamentals of the golf swing
- § Maintain a consistent practice schedule with your golf swing
- § Use swing drills to develop every as of your golf swing
- § The possible implementation of training aides into your practice sessions
- § Implementing of golf fitness program to develop your body around the golf swing.

The "basket of tools" listed above put together can lead you to developing great tempo in your golf swing. It requires a comprehensive approach in which no short cuts can be made. Let's take a look at the bullet points above to get a better understanding of how to go about this process.

Proper Instruction in the Mechanics of the Golf Swing

Learning the fundamentals of the golf swing is key to developing tempo. This can be achieved through quality instruction. This will allow your body to learn the nuances of the swing. This is the first step in developing tempo.

Consistent Practice of the Golf Swing

As they say practice makes perfect. In order for your body to learn and be able to repeat to proper mechanics of the golf swing, you must practice on a consistent basis. The body learns biomechanical movements through repetition. The golf swing is no different. Repetition through proper practice session is the second key to developing tempo.

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Swing Drills to Develop the Golf Swing

The golf swing as a whole is one of the most intricate athletic movements to perform. In its entirety, it is a very difficult movement to perform and master. It is best when learning the golf swing to break it down into parts. Breaking the golf swing down into segments allows you more easily to master each phase of the swing. This is accomplished through the implementation of golf swing drills. Swing drills break the swing down into manageable parts.

Training Aides in Association with Your Golf Swing Drills

Training aides assist the body in developing the golf swing. Think of training aides as "training wheels" on a bicycle. They simply help your body learn certain movements and positions associated with the golf swing.

Implementing a Golf Fitness Program

Your body swings the golf club and performs the biomechanics of the golf swing. In order to perform the biomechanics of the golf swing correctly. It is necessary for your body to have certain levels of flexibility, balance, endurance, strength, and power. If your body is lacking any of this aforementioned list learning the biomechanics of the golf swing correctly will be very difficult. A golf fitness program is the final key to developing tempo in your golf swing.

Summary

To summarize the development of tempo in your golf swing requires a "basket of tools". Tempo requires; proper instruction on the golf swing, consistent practice of your golf swing mechanics, the utilization of swing drills, training aides, and a golf fitness program. Put all of these aspects together and a golf swing with tempo will be yours.

Sean

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