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Rotation, Rotation, And More Rotation In Your Golf Swing

By Sean Cochran

In real estate, it's location, location and location.

In golf, it's all about rotation. More power requires better rotation. To keep your body healthier, it's about better rotation. For consistency, you'd better be able to rotate.

The body rotates around a spine angle that should be fixed or stable, keeping your club on the proper swing path. Are you able to do this with your swing?

This may be the idea that separates the high handicapper and low handicapper: the ability to rotate your body, keeping the club on a consistent swing plane.

Admittedly, some of the pros like Jim Furyk make some interesting movements in the swing, but if you dissect it a little further, you will notice they keep the club in a certain slot on the backswing and on the downswing. Every tour player is able to rotate around a fixed or stable spine angle, make a linear weight transfer, and successfully hit the golf ball.

This is the goal of the golf swing: keep the golf club in a slot, essentially dissecting the shoulder on the back swing and follow through.

How many of us do that?

Fewer than we would probably like to admit. So how do we rotate the body and keep the club in this slot? The answer is probably not the one we would like to hear. It requires developing a "feel" for the golf swing and knowing what the body is doing at every step of the golf swing.

Essentially, you must develop a feel for both the club and your body. Some of us are better at it than others. At this point, it is ingrained into the body and you will know when the swing is off and what to correct. Keep in mind, we are not going to make a perfect swing every time, but that is our goal.

How do we go about keeping the swing on the correct plane and developing "feel?"

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I know of two possibilities. One of the answers is probably quite obvious.

The first answer to this question has to do with your golf swing mechanics. Yes, probably not a surprise to many of you.

The golf swing is an intricate, biomechanical movement requiring you to perform a large number of movements with the correct timing and no room for error.

Understanding the correct biomechanical sequence of the golf swing and the ability to execute it take great instruction, a good amount of practice, patience and time.

The body can learn either the correct or incorrect way to swing a golf club. As a result, it is imperative to receive quality instruction on the proper way to swing a club.

Secondly, the mind and body learn new movements through repetition. The only way to learn the correct golf swing is through consistent practice. Practice ingrains into your brain, nerves, and muscles how to properly execute the movements of the golf swing, the correct sequence of the golf swing, and the correct timing of the golf swing.

Finally, to learn the golf swing correctly it takes time. It is not an overnight process but requires consistent time spent practicing and playing. Don't let anyone fool you that there is a quick-fix patch that will drop your handicap 25 strokes while you're sleeping.

Over a certain time period the body will learn the swing. It's different for each of us. Once the body learns the swing, the "feel" begins to develop. Once you get that feel, you will begin know exactly where your clubhead is at all times during the golf swing.

I can't feel a thing!

Most of us understand that the golf swing is a rotational movement and requires learning the proper biomechanics of the golf swing. However, the second part of the answer of developing "feel" may be less understood.

Now think about this for a second. What if your body is not able to rotate around a fixed spine angle? If you can't rotate, it will be very, and I mean very, hard to keep your club in a slot.

I see it all the time with amateurs. They want to develop a good swing desperately, but are unable to do so because of a weak, inflexible, and powerless body.

If you are inflexible in the hips, how are you going to rotate in a manner that places the club in the correct slot for the downswing? It's not going to happen!

If you have poor balance, how are you going to develop "feel" in the golf swing? You're not!

It comes down to this notion about the golf swing.

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Your body is performing the mechanics of the golf swing. In order to do this properly, your body must have certain levels of flexibility, balance, strength, endurance, and power.

The only, and I mean only, way to develop a good swing and "feel" within your swing requires a body that can support your swing.

The swing is a very complex movement requiring a synergy between your body and the mechanics of the swing. If you attempt to develop a swing without a body to support it, you are on your way to a very frustrating experience and lowering your handicap will be a trying time.

I would strongly suggest implementing a program that develops your swing mechanics in conjunction with your body. The exercises in *Your Body & Your Swing* will take your body to where it needs to be.

If you are looking for help learning the correct golf swing mechanics, take a look at our golf swing instructional videos. Putting both the body and the swing together will give you the results you're looking for.

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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Squaring The Golf Club At Impact, The Rotator Cuff, And Golf Fitness

By Sean Cochran

We all know the clubface must be square at impact and the club releases thereafter. Generally speaking a large amount of golf swing mechanics center upon returning the clubface to square at impact. Additionally, the golf swing is a "total body" movement incorporating every joint in the body. In order for the clubface to be square at impact all of these joints must work in coordination to allow this to occur.

In relation to the body, specific muscles are very active in returning the clubface to square. One joint directly involved in the squaring of the clubface at impact with the golf ball is the shoulder joint. The shoulder joint is a "ball and socket" joint allowing for the arms to move through a large range of motion. Review of the biomechanics of the golf swing, it becomes very evident the arms move through a large

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range of motion.

That being said, there are specific muscles involved in the rotation of the arms. Again, these are not the only muscles involved in squaring the clubface, but from an anatomical perspective, these muscles are active in the internal and external rotation of the arms during the golf swing.

Going back to squaring the clubface, internal and external rotation of the arms is required. To get a sense of internal and external rotation, simply stand up with your arms hanging at your sides. Rotate your hands inward and outward. This is a simple description of internal and external rotation of the arms. Now if you relate this movement to the golf swing you can see how the arms internally and externally rotate during the backswing, downswing, and follow through.

Certain muscles within the shoulder complex have a direct effect on internal rotation, external rotation, and stabilization of the shoulder complex in the golf swing. The muscles we are talking about are the rotator cuff muscles. Yes, the rotator cuff.

Not necessarily a group of muscles that go "hand-in-hand" with the golf swing and probably more thought of when we talk about baseball and pitching. Nevertheless, these muscles are active in the golf swing. The rotator cuff is a reference to four muscles in the shoulder complex. For those of you that love the science behind this stuff, the four muscles that comprise the rotator cuff are; supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor, and subscapularis.

The rotator cuff has a couple primary functions when it comes to the shoulder complex. First off, they act to stabilize the shoulder capsule. The skeletal structure comprising the shoulder is a ball and socket joint. The "socket" part of this joint is very shallow. As a result the muscles of the rotator cuff in addition to muscles in the "back-side" of the shoulder assist in stabilizing the shoulder during movement. An over simplification would state these muscles assist in keeping the arm in the socket. If the rotator cuff muscles did not assist in stabilizing the shoulder, the arm would literally come out of the socket every time you swing a golf club.

Secondly, these four muscles are actively involved in elevating, internally, and externally rotating the arms. All of which are movements involved in the golf swing. Beginning in the take-away and completing with the follow through, the muscles of the rotator cuff are active in every phase of the golf swing. That being said, we know the muscles of the rotator cuff are under stress each every golf swing.

It is important to understand the muscles of the rotator cuff are very small. They are not big muscles such as your quadriceps or deltoids. They are very small muscles asked to perform a myriad of activities. As a result of the size and workloads placed upon these muscles. They can become fatigued quite easily. Once muscles become fatigued they begin to falter in performing their required activities. In addition once muscles are fatigued, they can easily become injured.

During my years on tour, I have never seen someone injure a cuff muscle from swinging a golf club. I have seen rotator cuff injuries impede a golf swing, and if you have ever injured a rotator cuff muscle you know how debilitating an injury it can be. The point being this: The rotator cuff muscles are actively involved in the golf swing. Injury to a rotator cuff muscle can be very debilitating to your golf swing or

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any activity for that case.

Knowing what we know about the mechanics of the golf swing, the rotator cuff, functions of the rotator cuff, and how they affect the golf swing. This information invariably indicates to us it is necessary to keep the rotator cuff healthy and strong. How can one achieve this goal? Simply by adding a golf fitness program incorporating rotator cuff exercises.

Rotator cuff exercises will focus on these four muscles. These types of exercises will develop higher levels of strength and endurance within these muscles. This will assist in these muscles handling the workloads placed upon them during the golf swing or any athletic activity. So I strongly suggest if you are an avid golfer or a weekend warrior. Add some golf fitness and rotator cuff exercises to your training program. This will help keep you in the game and off the sidelines.

Sean Cochran

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