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Simple Indoor Golf Drills To Keep Your Game In Shape During The Winter

By Jack Moorehouse

Master the three scoring clubs—the driver, the wedge, and the putter—and you'll improve your

game dramatically. With 14 clubs to hit, golfers often have trouble deciding which part of their game to work on. If you're serious about working on your game, focus on the three scoring clubs. They have the greatest impact on your score. Unfortunately, not all of us live in a climate where we can always practice outdoors. Even if we do, we don't always have the time to go to a driving range and hit balls. That doesn't mean we can't work on the fundamentals needed to master the three clubs. We just need to do it indoors. Below are several indoor drills that will help you master these three clubs. They can be done in almost any location, even your office.

Putter There are three "musts" in becoming a good putter: (1) your stroke must follow target line; (2) your putter must remain square to the target line; (3) and your forward stroke must equal (or slightly exceed) your backstroke. The following drill emphasizes these putting musts. The next drill focuses on distance control, also a key aspect of putting.

· Drop two phone books on the floor. Position them far enough apart so that your putterhead barely squeezes through them. Place a golf ball between the books, assume your putting posture, and make your stroke.

Use the books as a visual guide to match the lengths of your backstroke and forwardstroke. Matching the lengths ensures a smooth stroke with perfect tempo. You'll find it difficult to guide your putter between the phone books unless your stroke follows the intended putting line. If your putter strikes the side of either book, your stroke strayed off-line.

Also, mark your ball with a straight line. Set that line parallel to your target line. Marking the ball makes it easier to align the putter perpendicular to the target line at address. See if the line falls to the right or left of center as your ball rolls after impact. If it does, then your stroke may have deviated off-line or made contact with a slightly open or closed putter face.

· This drill improves distance control. Set or balance a ball (or a tee turned upside down) on a penny and putt a second ball to this ball so that it touches the first, but DOESN'T knock it off the penny! This

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one is SUPER TOUGH! Try various distances. You should soon forget about the line and "making" the putt—distance control is everything. Rolling the ball to the target with an acceptable "sink" speed becomes second nature as you try to just touch the target ball.

Pitching Wedge These drills can be done just about anywhere. It improves one of the most important parts of your game—wedge play.

- Find about 10 feet of open floor space. Put a small towel on the floor and stand about 10 feet away. Use a short, smooth stroke, keeping your hands ahead of the clubface. Try chipping 50 balls onto the towel. Practice so the balls land on the towel, not come to rest on the towel. Start with an 8 iron, then move to a 9 iron, and then to a wedge. The more you practice the better control you'll have over those short chips.

Next time you're on the practice range, try the same drill. Watch how far each club makes the ball roll

on the putting surface. Now you'll have more control over your chips under different conditions. After awhile, you should be able to nestle every shot close to the pin, or sink it!

Driver Many golfers turn their hips and shoulders simultaneously when swing a club. Too much lower body rotation eliminates torque between the upper and lower body. Adding more backswing torque to your swing generates distance.

- Sit down in a chair. Spread your feet out wide and keep them flat on the ground. Hold a 7 or 8 iron out in front of you. Hold the clubhead with one hand and the end of the grip in the other hand. Raise the club over your head and rest the shaft across your neck and shoulders. Turn your shoulders to the right. Hold this position for a few seconds. You should feel a lot of torque along your left side. The turn your shoulders back and face forward. Relax and repeat.

Many golfers use their hands and arms only when swinging the driver. They don't rotate their shoulders, sapping power from their swing. This drill helps keep your hands, arms, and shoulders in sync as you swing back and through.

- Lower yourself down to the floor onto your knees. Hold a ball between your hands and out in front of your. Start by making some small moves swinging the ball back and forth. The idea is to keep the ball in front of your chest as your arms swing and your shoulders rotate. Increase the length of your swing going back and through. As you reach the end of your backswing and forward swing, allow your arms to fold. Swing back and fold your arms. Swing down and unfold them. Swing through and fold them again.

These drills improve control of the three most important clubs in your bag—the driver, the putter, and the wedge. You can do them in your house or your garage. Each focuses on fundamentals you must master to take your game to the next level.

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. He is NOT a golf pro, rather a working man that was able to figure out the

secrets of shooting in the 70's on a consistent basis without quitting your day job. Jack has helped thousands of golfers from all seven continents

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 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

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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.

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

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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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