

Being in south Florida, the golf season is in full swing, but is your golf fitness? Each year thousands of golfers spend thousands of dollars buying the newest driver, most expensive golf balls, and most creative training aid, all in the hopes of playing better golf and lowering their handicap. Even worse than that, thousands of golfers each year get injured playing their beloved sport. Now, if there was a way to lower your handicap and to prevent injuries, I am sure 90% of all golfers would go to the nearest store and buy it. Well, there is a way, but it is not at the nearest golf shop, its lying within the realm of a golf specific fitness program. And this is why golf fitness has taken over the PGA tour and every other competition level in golf, which in turn has trickled down to the amateur and recreational golfer in the last few years.

The reason why a golf fitness program is effective and so popular is that it increases your physical conditioning and targets areas of the body that are specific to the golf swing. Being physically fit allows you to play 18 holes of golf without feeling fatigued and to stay focused throughout the round. Perhaps more important, a well-conditioned body can produce a more powerful and coordinated golf swing. I am sure most people have felt themselves fatigue in the middle of a round and see their game fall apart. This is why the notion that golf is not physically demanding could not be further from the truth. The average golfer swings the club 85-90 mph and does this about a hundred times including pre-round warm-ups. To put it in perspective, to swing the club at that speed it takes about 90% of peak muscular contraction at impact. This is why a golf fitness routine is so vital to enhanced performance and injury prevention.

A properly designed golf fitness program should include flexibility, core stability, golf specific strength & endurance, cardiovascular, and balance training that is based on the person's golf fitness evaluation findings. Without an evaluation first, a golf fitness program may be ineffective or even counterproductive. The reasons being two fold, first, a golf fitness program should follow a progression and the golfer should be placed in that progression depending on their particular fitness level. For example, if a person has no core stability at all, placing them on a stability ball may be dangerous. The second reason for performing an evaluation is to determine if the golfer has any biomechanical issues that are causing or may cause an over-use injury. By assessing a golfer's posture, range of motion, and functional movements of the shoulder, may reveal the potential or the cause of a shoulder condition. This is where a physician trained in golf biomechanics can prescribe specific exercises to rehab pain syndromes or "prehab" any areas deemed susceptible to injury for that particular golfer.

So when the decision is made to start a golf fitness program, make sure that it entails the previously mentioned components and that it is specifically designed with golf biomechanics in mind. Lastly, realizing that a golf fitness program is not only beneficial for golf, but is also essential to the overall health of the person is imperative.