

Does stretching provide control for your swing?

Stretching is an important part of your golf routine but it must be specific to your swing issues. Adding a specific strength training routine for your swing issues is the first step in reducing that handicap and playing at your best.

Michael Jones



As a golf fitness trainer I am amazed by students I teach when they ask why they are not more consistent and are not hitting it further, despite lots of stretching but not necessarily using golf-specific activating exercises.

For decades, health professionals have saturated us with the idea that stretching is the main priority for all golfers. While stretching is important, when it comes to developing control and muscle endurance, golf-specific exercise is the key to changing your swing dynamics and performance results.

When you look at a golf swing as a whole, it's a dynamic movement that roughly takes only 1 second, so you need your golf muscles to activate quickly. Stretching can make you feel loose or relaxed but sometimes can upset your normal golf swing's range of motion or affect your timing mechanisms. If you were to combine the stretching and golf-specific

activating exercises (vs stretching only as a form of pseudo activating golf exercises) you would find vast improvements in swing control and muscle endurance.

Think of the benefits of going to the practice range or sitting in the locker room and completing a 15 minute combined strengthening and stretching program, all based around your swing faults and focusing on balance and co-ordination.

Touring professionals under the tuition of Elite Golf Fitness Australia do most of their warm-up and activation exercises on the same spot where they hit balls and then return to the locker room to stretch once the previous tasks have been completed. While their practice time has been reduced, their quality of work has improved. Remember golfers usually spend 4 to 5 hours out on the course so I would rather have strong muscles and endurance versus soft and fatigued muscles.

Simply stretching your muscles physiologically provides increased range of motion, guards against injury and is essential in your warm up and cool down routines in your golf performance. However,



Lunges on Bosu: Stretching groin and hip flexor trunk. Strengthening Legs hips back abs shoulders. Beginner: 1 to 2 sets, 8 to 10 reps. Intermediate: 2 to 3 sets, 10 to 15 reps.

long loose muscles do not provide control if not strengthened. In fact stretching has the opposite effect, producing less control and in the golf swing provides more chance of error. To obtain the best result, a specific exercise routine for your swing problems should be combined with a stretching routine that enhances your swing rather than changing its swing pattern.

Stretching alone will not increase power by increasing your ability to produce more club head speed through a larger swing arc. Without increasing the strength of the muscle, you provide less muscle control and



Bosu squat and rotate: Stretching gluts and hamstrings, strengthening legs back shoulders abs, Beginner: 1 to 2 sets, 8 to 10 reps. Intermediate: 2 to 3 sets, 10 to 15 reps.

stability — compounding any existing golf swing issues you already have.

By complementing your stretching with muscle activation or muscle endurance exercises, you can increase strength and control in your golf swing and extend your longevity in the game. ◀

Michael Jones is a AAA PGA Teaching Professional, and the Director of Golf Teaching at Elite Golf Fitness Australia. EGFA designs golf exercise programs to enhance swing technique and correct physical limitations. www.egfa.com.au

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