

Conditioning Exercises for Improving Golf Focus on Core Strength and Flexibility

Golfers need to focus on technique to see improvement, but two basic components of conditioning can improve your golf fitness and reduce your risk of injury.

The two areas to focus on include **core strength /stability** and **flexibility exercises**. The muscles of the core are the powerhouse and the foundation of your golf swing so proper conditioning will make a huge difference in the power you get from your long shots. Good core strength also allows you to have more endurance so your short game is more precise, fresh and controlled. The core exercises work the muscles of the abdominals, back and hips. Many other muscles attach to this area so the midsection is considered the foundation of all movement.

A great exercise routine for the Core can be had by using [The Champion's Workout Exercises](#).

One simple 'must-do' core strength exercise is the **Plank with Arm and Leg Lift**. (*See below*)

Golf and flexibility go hand in hand and you need to spend a bit of time on range of motion for the perfect golf swing. If your muscles are tight and not flexible you will have reduced range of motion and a short swing. Pro golfers have amazing range and a fluid swing, in large part because of flexibility in the shoulders, torso, and hips.

Two simple stretches for golfers: The Lying Leg Crossover and the Backswing Stretch are outlined below. These are but two golf specific stretches that will improve your flexibility and thus, improve your game.

Adding these two components to your golf conditioning program will not only improve your game, but will likely improve your overall fitness as well.

Plank - Hover - Abdominal Exercise - Core Strength

Add these core-strengthening exercises to your ab workout for a new way to build strength and stability.

Plank (Hover) Exercise

- * Start in the plank position (see photo 1) with your forearms and toes on the floor.
- * Keep your torso straight and rigid and your body in a straight line from ears to toes with no sagging or bending.
- * Your head is relaxed and you should be looking at the floor.
- * Hold this position for 10 seconds to start.
- * Over time work up to 30, 45 or 60 seconds.



Plank with Leg Lift

Start in the same plank position (photo 1) as above with your forearms and toes on the floor.

- * Keep your leg straight with your toe flexed.
- * Slowly raise one leg 5-8 inches off the floor (photo 2)
- * Hold 1-2 seconds and slowly to the floor.
- * Switch legs and repeat.
- * Do about 2-3 sets of 10 reps.



Plank with Arm Lift

- * Start in the same plank position (photo 1) as above.
- * Carefully shift your weight to your right forearm.
- * Extend your left arm straight out in front of you.
- * Hold 3 seconds while keeping your core tight.
- * Slowly bring your arm back to starting position.
- * Switch arms and repeat.
- * Do 2-3 sets of 10 reps.

Modified Plank with Leg Lift

To make this exercise a bit easier, you can perform the movement on your hands, rather than your elbows.

Core Muscle Strength and Stability Testing

The Plank exercise can be used as the basis for assessing an individual's current core strength and stability and then to monitor progress over time. Learn how to do the Core Muscle Strength and Stability Test.

The Core Muscle Strength & Stability Test

The objective of this evaluation is to monitor the development and improvements of an athlete's core strength and endurance over time. To prepare for the assessment you you will need:

- * Flat surface
- * Mat
- * Watch or clock with second counter

Conducting the Test

1. Position the watch or clock where you can easily see it
2. Start in the Plank Exercise Position (elbows on the ground)
Hold for 60 seconds
3. Lift your right arm off the ground
Hold for 15 seconds
4. Return your right arm to the ground and lift the left arm off the ground
Hold for 15 seconds
5. Return your left arm to the ground and lift the right leg off the ground
Hold for 15 seconds
6. Return your right leg to the ground and lift the left leg off the ground
Hold for 15 seconds
7. Lift your left leg and right arm off the ground
Hold for 15 seconds
8. Return you left leg and right arm to the ground
9. Lift your right leg and left arm off the ground
Hold for 15 seconds
10. Return to the Plank Exercise Position (elbows on the ground)
Hold this position for 30 seconds

Results

* **Good Core Strength**

If you can complete the test fully, you have good core strength.

* **Poor Core Strength**

If you can not complete the test fully, your core strength needs improvement.

Poor core strength results in unnecessary torso movement and swaying during all other athletic movements. This results in wasted energy and poor biomechanics. Good core strength indicates that the athlete can move with high efficiency.

- o If you are unable to complete the test, practice the routine three or four times each week until you improve.

- o By comparing your results over time, you will note improvements or declines in core strength.

How Simple Golf Stretches Can Add Yards to Your Drives

From Mike Pedersen, Golf Fitness Expert

To quickly improve your golf, stretch your golf muscles regularly!

What's the difference between a "golf stretch" and an everyday stretch? The answer to this question may be your missing link to a great game and years of enjoyment instead of frustration and weak attempts at quitting the game.

The key is to do golf stretches **daily**. Yes, that's right - daily! It will take you only a few minutes to get them done, but the improvement in your game can be quick and dramatic. The return on this investment (of time) is well worth it.

Now, which stretches to do to get the quickest return?

That's a personal issue. Everyone has different limitations. Some are backswing related, others are follow through issues or even maintaining your golf posture.

Below are listed a couple of golf stretches that will help you prevent back pain and increase your backswing range of motion for longer drives.

Lying Leg Crossover:

- Lie on back with legs extended.
- Raise one leg and bend at knee to 90 degrees in knee and hip.
- Cross that leg over extended leg, while opposite shoulder stays on ground.
- Go until you feel a slight pull in the butt and lower back.
- Hold for 15 seconds and repeat once more.
- Switch legs and do opposite side.

This simple golf stretch will not only make your back feel better, but it will improve your ability to make a bigger turn, with less hip movement, creating torque and energy.

Backswing Stretch:

- Extend left arm (for right-handers) out in front of you.
- Take right hand and put under left wrist.
- Pull with right hand against left wrist and make as big a turn on backswing as you can.
- Hold for at least 15 seconds, repeat once more.
- Switch to your other side, going the opposite direction, for the follow through.

This simple golf stretch will loosen up the muscles in the back of your shoulders and your upper back (lats), for more freedom on both your backswing and follow through.

Do these two stretches daily and you'll start seeing improvement in your game, including more yards off the tee.

Note: These are only two golf stretches isolating certain areas of the body. To get the full benefit for your golf game, you need to do golf stretches for each muscle group. Following are other stretches that you could include in your stretching routine.

Side Bends

- 1) Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and arms at your side
- 2) Bend to the right keeping your hips facing forward and letting your right arm slide down the outside of your thigh until a stretch is felt along the left side of your torso
- 3) Hold each stretch for a count of 10
- 4) Repeat 3 times
- 5) Reverse arm positions bending to the left and complete steps 1-4 above

Trunk Rotation

- 1) Stand with your feet shoulder width apart
- 2) Bend your arms at your elbows grasping the golf club behind your head
- 3) Twist your upper body toward the right keeping your hips facing forward
- 4) Hold for a count of 10
- 5) Twist your body toward the left and hold
- 6) Repeat each stretch 3 times

Quadriceps Stretch

- 1) Stand with one arm holding onto a wall or your golf partner
- 2) With the other hand grasp your ankle and pull your foot behind you toward your buttocks
- 3) Feel a stretch in the front of your thigh
- 4) Hold for a count of 10
- 5) Repeat 3 times on each leg

Hamstring Stretch

- 1) Sit with your right leg out in front and your left leg bent so your left foot touches your right knee
- 2) Reach down your right leg until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh
- 3) Hold for 10 seconds
- 4) Repeat times 3
- 5) Repeat steps 1-4 with your left leg out in front