

Lower Back Tightness During a Round of Golf

By Sean Cochran

Overall the goal of golf fitness training is to prepare the body to play better golf. This will provide you the opportunity to get up and down from that green side bunker where you have an awkward stance, requiring more strength from the lower body and better balance. So, it does not come as a surprise that a question mark may arise in your head when we discuss golf fitness training during a round of golf. Or even more so how golf fitness training can help with lower back tightness.

It is not a common occurrence but there are certain situations where golf fitness exercises can be beneficial during a round. One such situation is lower back tightness: It is not a common occurrence during a round of golf to have your lower back “tighten up”, but if it does, it will play havoc on your golf swing. And we really want to alleviate such a situation and get you back to going after pins rather than thinking about a twinge in the lower back.

Before discussing how to utilize golf fitness exercises in such a situation, let's discuss what is happening to your lower back when it “tightens up” or becomes strained during a round. The biomechanics of the golf swing place large amounts of shear force on the lower back each and every swing. These shear forces stress the musculature of the lower back.

Over time if the muscles of the lower back are not strong and flexible. The stresses placed upon it by the golf swing will cause fatigue. Once the lower back is fatigued, the muscles of lower back will not function properly, and to protect themselves from injury they will shorten (i.e. “tighten up”). This can easily occur during a practice session or even round of golf.

This results in feelings of discomfort, possible spasms, and a decreased range of motion. All of which will take away from the execution of your swing. The long-term solution to this situation would be the implementation of a core program to increase the strength levels of the lower back. Unfortunately, during a round of golf we need immediate relief from the lower back tightness to get you through the round.

The short term fix or “band aide” to use in this situation is the implementation of a few simple golf fitness exercises. These golf fitness exercises will be in the form of flexibility exercises to stretch the “tight” muscles of the lower back. These types of flexibility exercises in the short term will alleviate the tightness in the lower back. Remember this is not a long-term solution, but rather a way to keep you in the game so to speak.

One such golf flexibility exercise I have found beneficial in such a situation is the Dog Down. The flexibility exercise is simple to perform, stretches the lower back, hamstrings, and takes little time to execute. Begin by bending over, allow the knees to bend, place hands on the ground, feet shoulder width apart, and your heels flat. Slowly extend the knees straight until a stretch is felt in the lower back and hamstrings. Hold this position for 30-45 seconds.

This exercise should provide some immediate relief to lower back tightness during a round. Repeat as often as needed, but keep in mind this is only a “band aide” or short term fix. To prevent such situations in the long term is probably best to implement a golf fitness program entailing flexibility and strengthening exercises for the lower back.

Sean Cochran is one of the most recognized golf fitness instructors in the world today. He travels the PGA Tour regularly working with professional golfers, most notable PGA and Masters Champion Phil Mickelson. To learn more about Sean Cochran and his golf fitness exercises and training programs go to <http://www.seancochran.com>

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