

SMARTER GOLF TRAINING:

INCREASE YOUR DRIVE TO INCREASE YOUR DRIVE!

by Patrick Ward, MS(c), CSCS



and exercise programs for fear that it would cause them to get “bulky” and lose range of motion in their swing. Today’s golfers are of a different breed, however. Many of them understand the importance of strength and conditioning and know that increasing their strength will allow them to generate a greater power output.

stretched and then contracted in an explosive manner. The main benefit of plyometric exercises is to increase neurological efficiency to help enhance muscle power.

The mechanics of the golf swing are consistent with plyometric exercises. The golf swing is a complex athletic movement, using the entire body to impart the necessary velocity on the club to drive the ball down the fairway. Of special interest to golfers are hip strength and power. The ability to transfer force from the hips and increase club speed is a critical component to the golf swing [1,3]. You begin with a rapid stretch of the hips, trunk and shoulders during the back swing, followed by a downswing, performed in an explosive, accelerated manner. In a right-handed golfer, the movement of the down swing is initiated by turning of the left hip [1]. This allows the body to create high amounts of power by taking advantage of both the pre-stretch and the ground reaction forces which the hips are driving against [3].

An exercise used to replicate this hip movement is the rotational medicine ball chest

Increase your drive to increase your drive? What could that possibly mean? What I am talking about here is increasing your neural drive in order to increase your drive off the tee. Simply put, neural drive is the amount and strength of an impulse going to a muscle. The more neurologically efficient you are, the greater neural drive you will have, which will lead to a greater ability to display power.

Let’s face it – golf is a power sport. It requires you to move in an explosive manner to drive the ball down the fairway. In the past, golfers were very skeptical toward weightlifting

“The distance the ball travels when hit is determined by the speed of the club head at impact.” - Ben Hogan, *Power Golf* [1]. Researchers at the University of Luten investigated what effects an exercise program combining weight training and plyometrics would have on golf performance. The athletes who performed the exercise program showed a significant improvement in both driving distance and club head speed when compared to those who did not! [2]

Plyometrics

A plyometric exercise is one in which muscles are rapidly

pass. Begin by holding a medicine ball at chest level, standing perpendicular to a rebounder [Fig. 1]. If you don't have a rebounder, you can use a brick or concrete wall instead. From that position, shift your weight toward the back leg (this is the pre-stretch) and then explosively transfer force to the front leg, driving with the hips and reaching triple extension with the back leg (ankle, knee and hip are fully extended), similar to the follow-through of your golf swing [Fig. 2]. In order to realize your full power potential, you release the ball at the end of the movement by throwing a chest pass towards the re-bouncer or the wall [Fig. 3]. Be prepared to catch it when it bounces back [Fig. 4]. Upon catching it, immediately prepare for the next repetition. Perform 3-4 sets of 8-10 repetitions.

Work on integrating some plyometric exercises into your strength training program to help enhance your power output and the next time you head out on the course, you may be surprised!

REFERENCES

1. Hogan B. Power Golf. Pocket Books Publishing. 1953.
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3. Hume PA, Keogh J, Reid D. The role of biomechanics in maximizing distance and accuracy of golf shots. Sports Med. 2005;35(5): 429-49

Patrick Ward is an NSCA-certified strength and conditioning specialist, an NASM-certified personal trainer, and a USA Weightlifting-Certified Club Coach. He is pursuing a Masters degree in Exercise Science and Health Promotion. Patrick has worked with clients training for general health, fat loss, rehabilitation, and sports conditioning. Prior to joining COR Clinic, Patrick was a top-level personal trainer in New York City, where he also hosted seminars for other trainers, covering topics such as program design, periodization and fitness assessments. He served as a strength and conditioning consultant for various athletes of all ages and status.

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