



Stretch Your Neck for a Better Turn

Many people know that Jack Nicklaus has the interesting habit rotating his head to the right at address before he starts his backswing. In fact, because Jack was successful with this technique, practically three generations of golfers have tried to emulate his approach. Unfortunately, not many golfers know *why* Jack used this approach. Was it something he decided to do based on a performance benefit or was it something that he was forced to do because of his individual physical limitations?

The truth is, when Jack turns his head to the right at address, he is doing it because his neck does not turn well to the left. He has very limited natural neck rotation to the left. Therefore, by turning his head to the right at address, he can achieve a fuller shoulder turn without having to stress his neck at the top of his backswing. Fortunately, he is also left eye dominant. This allows him to still see enough of the ball at the top of his backswing even though his head is rotated off the ball to the right.

For most golfers, however, the better alternative to acting like Jack, regardless of his success over the years with his unique approach, would be to have complete neck flexibility. Then, instead of being forced into a limited shoulder turn in either your backswing or follow-through and being dependent on your eye dominance to see the ball during your full turn, you could make a complete backswing while remaining steady over the ball and you would minimize the repeated stress and injury potential to your neck.

One very helpful neck exercise to improve your ability to rotate is the "Tuck and Spin". To perform this exercise, simply lay on your back on a firm, carpeted surface with your hips and knees bent (see picture #1). Begin the "Tuck and Spin" by elongating the back of your neck and attempting to press the curve of your neck into the floor. Your chin will depress and you should feel like you are creating a double chin in the process (see picture #2). When you have reached this "tuck" position, maintain the tuck while you "spin" your head to the right as far as possible until you feel a *comfortable stretch* in your neck muscles. Hold this end position of rotation right for 1-2 breaths and then spin your head back to the starting position while continuing to maintain the tucked, elongated neck position. Relax your neck and repeat the "Tuck and Spin" to the right for 1-2 sets of 10 repetitions. Then, perform the same exercise to your left.

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