

How to Add Strength to Add Needed Length

Today, every knowledgeable professional and high level amateur golfer who wants to play their best and stay injury-free is getting professional input on the proper strengthening exercises that are customized to their golf-specific needs. Perhaps, the single most dramatic impact on the success of a player like David Duval during his rise to being ranked number one in the world has been the physical changes he has made in his body.

There have been many misconceptions about strengthening for golf. For years, most experts feared that if you built-up muscles that you would become “muscle bound”, lose the needed flexibility and touch to play well. Obviously, looking like, Arnold Schwarzenegger can only be a result of strength training and there haven’t been any successful PGA Tour players, past or present that look like Arnold. However, with modern research and development of proper strength training techniques specific to the physical and performance demands of golf as well as the noted success of players like David Duval, the ignorance and misconceptions about strength training are rapidly fading.

Therefore, the purpose of this article will be to show you several important strengthening exercises. When properly performed over a period of time and integrated into continued professional swing instruction and custom-fit equipment, these exercises can add significant length and control to your game while, at the same time, greatly reduce your risk of injuries.

As with any exercise program, getting professional input from an expert who is knowledgeable about golf-specific exercises and who can evaluate your individual physical needs is a must. Furthermore, it is always advisable to consult with your physician before attempting any strengthening or conditioning exercises. With that understood, however, the following exercises are helpful for many golfers to build needed strength in their abdominal muscles, hips and legs, shoulders and arms. When consistently performed at a frequency of 2-3 times per week, most golfers will begin to experience improvement in their ability to hit the ball farther and with greater control and consistency within 3-6 weeks.

The first three exercises should be performed for between **1-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions** and each repetition should be performed for about **6 seconds** (2 seconds for the “positive” or muscle *shortening* phase of the exercise and 4 seconds for the “negative” or muscle *lengthening* phase of the strengthening exercise). The last exercise should be performed as directed.

Abdominal Curl

The goal of the abdominal curl is to build stronger stomach muscles so that you can have a good solid foundation to turn on and accelerate the club during your downswing for added distance.

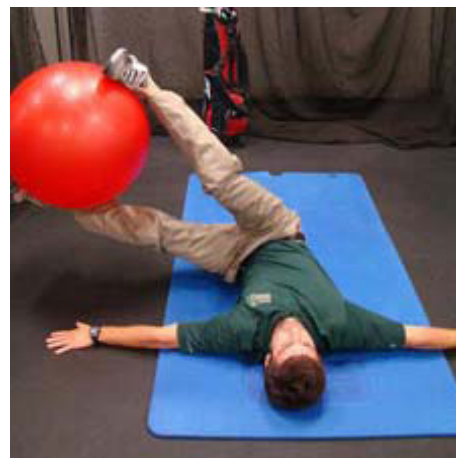
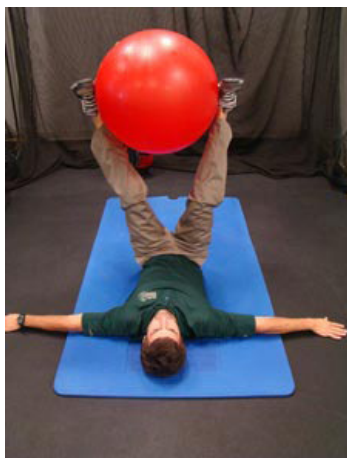
To begin the abdominal curl exercise, simply lie flat on the floor with your hips and knees comfortably bent (approximately 35-45°) and with your hands clasped behind your neck. From this position, take a breath in, contract your abdominal muscles and flatten your lower back to the floor. Then, as you keep your lower back flat to the floor, exhale slowly and curl your upper back and shoulders up off the floor until the bottom of your shoulder blades have cleared the floor. Be certain to maintain proper technique throughout this exercise by keeping your chin off your chest and your elbows apart while you lift. Slowly lower your upper back, shoulders and head back down to the floor and repeat as directed previously and/or until you feel a comfortable burn in your abdominal muscles.



Trunk Twists

The next exercise is called the “Trunk Twist”. The purpose of the trunk twist is to strengthen the rotational muscles of the abdomen and spine that will promote greater rotational speed and control during downswing for added distance.

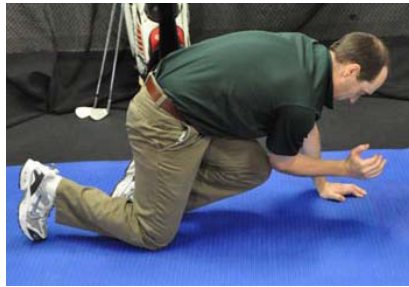
To perform this exercise, begin on your back with your hips and knees bent to 90° and your arms in the “double tray” position. Then, inhale and flatten your lower back to the floor with your lower abdominal muscles. With this achieved, exhale slowly and allow your torso, hips and legs gradually twist to your right as far as possible without allowing your left shoulder to lift off the floor. Next, take a new breath in and, as you slowly exhale, rotate your body as far as possible to your left without allowing your right shoulder to lift off the floor. Repeat this exercise back and forth with proper technique as previously directed or until you experience a comfortable burn in your stomach, spine, hip and leg muscles.



Alternate Arm and Leg Lift

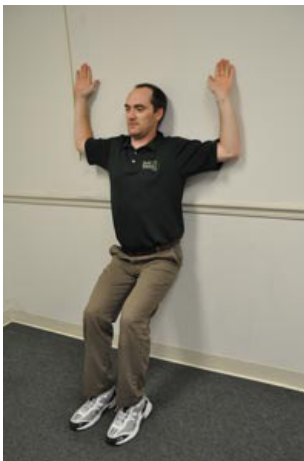
The next exercise is called the “Alternate Arm and Leg Lift”. The benefit of this exercise is to strengthen your shoulder blade, hip and back muscles so you can achieve and maintain proper posture and control during the entire golf swing. Without great posture and control during your full swing it is difficult to achieve enough club head speed and proper swing path for the added distance you are looking for.

To begin this exercise, get on your hands and knees. Then, keep your neck long, flatten your lower back by contracting your lower abdominal muscles and simultaneously lift both your right arm and your left leg. Next slowly lower your arm and leg and repeat with the opposite arm and leg. Continue as directed previously or until you feel a comfortable burn in your shoulder blade, hip and leg muscles.



Wall Sit

The last exercise is called the “Wall Sit”. This is an excellent exercise for strengthening both your hips and leg muscles for gaining added balance and power in your swing. Although most club head speed is generated from the arms, without a strong foundation, your arms could not be as effective in maximizing their ability to produce enough club head speed for great distance in a golf shot.



To perform this exercise, simply stand with your back against a wall and walk your feet several feet away from the wall. Then, flatten your lower back into the wall by contracting your lower abdominal muscles and slide your body down the wall until your hips and knees are bent approximately 45-60° (See Picture #6). Once achieved, hold this position for up to 1-3 minutes or until you feel a comfortable burn in your hip and thigh muscles. Slide back up the wall, rest as needed and repeat this exercise up to 10 times.

If you have questions about this article or want to find out more about how a **Body Balance for Performance**® customized fitness training program can help your game, please call 800-473-6211 or visit www.fitgolf.com.