



Golf Health and Fitness Tips

A common flaw among many golfers when attempting to get a full hip turn on the backswing is to slide and raise the right hip or to have an excessive lateral move to the right instead of a pure rotation of the hips.

Turning the hips correctly on the backswing will ensure several desired results during this phase of the swing. First, it will maintain the original balance; secondly, it will facilitate the proper distribution of weight throughout the backswing; thirdly, it will maintain the original knee flex in the right leg; and finally, it will help produce the appropriate shoulder turn.

In order for the hips to work correctly on the backswing, they must first be in the correct position at address. For the hips to have full range of motion (the ability to move without restriction) it is imperative to bend from the hip joints.

To find your hip joint, place a club vertically on your back starting from the midway point extending downward past your belt line. When bending forward make sure the club stays flat against the small of your back.

If your hips are turning appropriately it will allow the left side or left hip to work into or on top of the right leg. This will also cause the left shoulder to replace the right shoulder on the backswing. This will allow both knees to retain their original amount of bend and you will get the sensation that your weight is 50/50 on both feet. This instills a very strong and balanced position.

There are two good ways to check your hip turn on the backswing:

First, place a club along your belt holding it with your right hand. Now make a backswing with your left hand. If the club along your belt line is not level to the ground (like it is at address) then there is a problem.

The second test is to hold a club like a walking cane with your right hand so that the club is parallel to your right thigh (from your knee cap to the bottom of your pocket). Now make a backswing. If your hips are turning correctly the right *thigh line* will not change positions. If the right thigh line changes in either direction there is a problem. Again, the idea is to allow your hips to turn without the right *thigh line* being pulled out of position.

If you are not able to successfully perform these two tests it may indicate a sign of a problem with your flexibility. If you have an appropriate amount of *lumbo pelvic* (hip)

flexibility, you should be able to rotate your hips independent of your *thoracic* (chest and shoulders) region by as much as 25-30 degrees. To determine your hip flexibility, take a correct address position and have someone hold your shoulders. Now, turn only your hips, making sure that the right leg stays flexed. If you discover that your flexibility is not up to par, try these simple exercises. *

Hip Rotation Stretch

Lay on your back, hold the front of your right hip with your right hand, cross your right foot over your left knee and slowly pull your right thigh diagonally across your body with your left hand while keeping your right foot on the floor. Continue to gently pull until you feel a comfortable stretch in the outer portion of your right hip. Hold the light stretch for *several minutes* or until the initial stretch feeling has completely melted away. When completed, slowly release the stretch and repeat the stretch with the other side.

Trunk Rotation Stretch

Lay on your back, bend both hips and knees with your feet on the ground. While keeping your right shoulder flat on the ground, slowly and under control, allow your knee to rotate to the left until you feel a comfortable stretch in your right low back and hip. Hold the stretch for *several minutes* or until you feel the initial stretch feeling has, once again, completely melted away. When finished, slowly return to the neutral, starting position and repeat the stretch toward the other side.

*** Please consult your physician before attempting to perform these exercises. Although these exercises are generally safe for most individuals, if you notice any discomfort while performing these exercises, discontinue and consult with your physician immediately before continuing.**

For more information about golf-specific health and fitness or to find a Body Balance for Performance officially licensed center near you, call 1-888-FIT-GOLF (348-4653).