

Stay *Connected* for Maximum Power and Control

By David Ostrow, PT

Most every PGA instructor will agree that a golfer's hands should stay in front of his body throughout the entire golf swing. This is referred to as being *connected*. The benefits of staying connected are greater accuracy and power. This happens for two reasons. In a connected swing, the club remains on the proper path and plane more consistently throughout the swing producing more accuracy and shot control. Moreover, staying connected allows a more rapid change of directions from the top of the swing to the downswing adding more power and distance. This more *connected* transition to downswing naturally corrects the "over-the-top" and/or early wrist release called "casting". Two of the main power leakages and causes for inconsistent ball striking in many golfers' swings have now been eliminated when golfers stay *connected*.

Most golfers, unfortunately, *do not* have connected swings. Their hands and club travel past their chest during the backswing so they ultimately lose the connection between their club and the front of their body. This happens because most golfers don't have enough strength and stability in their left shoulder and/or arm muscles nor do they typically have enough rotational flexibility and strength in their spine to make a full shoulder turn. Therefore, a golfer with these common physical limitations will compensate by making a *disconnected* swing.

Two excellent exercises to help achieve a connected swing are the "Trunk Rotation Stretch" and the "Seated Row". The "Trunk Rotation Stretch" helps to improve golfers' abilities to make more complete shoulder turns without having to reach their hands behind them to accomplish a full backswing. The "Seated Row" is a great strengthening exercise for the muscles supporting the shoulder blades, upper back and arms so the arms don't fully disconnect from the chest at the top of the swing.

"Trunk Rotation Stretch"

To perform this stretch, lie on your back with your hips and knees comfortably bent. While keeping your right shoulder blade flat to the floor, slowly allow your knees and legs to twist to your left until you feel a gentle stretch in the muscles of your spine and/or right hip. Hold this stretch for approximately 3-5 minutes or until you experience a complete release of the initial stretch feeling. Slowly untwist your body and repeat the stretch to the opposite direction.

"Seated Row"

Secure a resistance band or piece of surgical tubing into a doorway. Start the "Seated Row" by squeezing both shoulder blades down and together and then pull your hands to your chest. Be certain to space the bench or stool you are sitting on at an appropriate distance from the doorway so that you feel a comfortable initial resistance that will allow you to slowly and smoothly perform between 1-2 sets of 10 repetitions of the "Seated Row" maintaining proper form (straight spine and shoulder blades tucking down and together).

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