

Improving Your Golf with Fitness

By Andrew Fodge, MS

Hello Golfers,

I want to address a common problem most golfers fall in to, when advised to start working out, and that is “Mirror Muscle Syndrome”. Of course this isn’t a medical condition, but it is a condition that seriously limits the abilities of most golfers attempting to add yardage to their swing. “Mirror Muscle Syndrome” of golfers to focus on the easy muscles to lift with, specifically the chest, biceps, and possibly the quadriceps (front of the thigh). Typically, men will gravitate towards exercises that work only these muscles as they are “easy” to see and feel the effect, like in the mirror. The quadriceps are also “easy” to see and feel the burn, without much effort. However, it is that overemphasis of these muscles, that can truly limit the golfer’s ability to reach through a full range of motion.

In this article, I wish to focus on two exercises with the goal of improving the strength and posture of a golfer. These exercises, one for the upper body and one for the lower body, will allow the golfer to have a better starting position and body control during the movement of their golf swing.

Starting with one of the most essential upper body exercises a golfer can do, the Lat Pulldown. We are about stress most of the muscles of the Back, as well as stabilizing the spine. In Figure 1, you can see the correct starting position of the exercise. Start with hands about shoulder width apart, then begin to pulldown towards your sternum about two inches below your collarbone. Figure 2, pictures the correct posture at the end of the Lat Pulldown, with the chest extended towards the bar. Commonly, most exercisers lose technique as well as posture when performing this exercise and begin to engage muscles in the chest, Figure 3. If your body begins to compensate with the muscles in the chest for a movement, like the Lat Pulldown, we can assume that you are most likely allowing your chest to tighten up or excessively engage in your golf swing. This could mean limited range of motion in both your backswing and follow-through.

The second exercise for the lower body, the dumbbell deadlift, targets the hamstrings and lower back with stabilizing a proper posture. The exercise begins in a standing position with arms and dumbbells resting at the sides of the body, Figure 4. Keeping the abdomen tight and shoulders slightly pulled back, hinge at the hips, allowing the torso to come towards the floor, Figure 5. In Figure 5, you can see that the knees are slightly bent. The eyes are looking downward, so as to not extend or arch the neck, you can see that spine straight

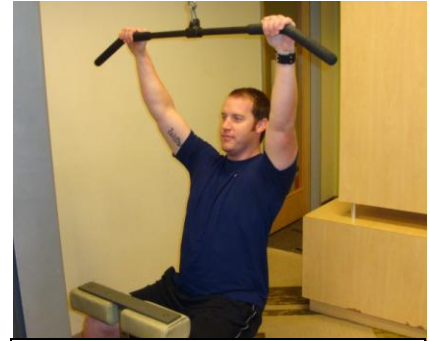


Figure 1 (Starting Position)

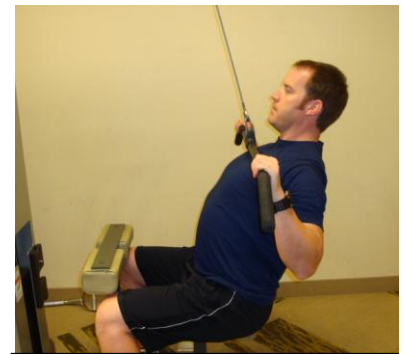


Figure 2 (Correct Posture)

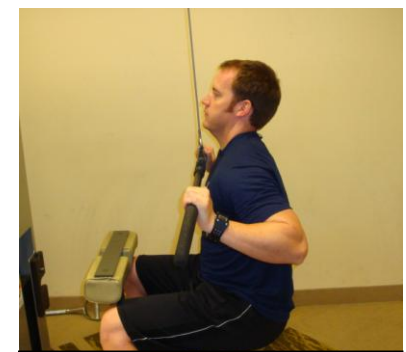


Figure 3 (Incorrect Posture)

and not arched or rounded. A stretch can be felt in the hamstrings (back of the thigh) while doing this exercise. Figure 6, shows the most common mistake while attempting this exercise. The incorrect posture puts all of the stress dangerously on the spine, avoiding any action by the hamstring muscles.

I would suggest adding these two exercises, into your routine at 2-3 sets of 15-20 repetitions. Though these exercises do not stress rotation of the body, which is required in a golf swing, they will give your body a better foundation of strength and posture to make your swing more effective.

If you need help with assessing your strength, flexibility, and power of your current fitness level and how to apply it to your golf game, please feel free to contact me at Andrew@fitnessbyandrew.com.



Figure 4 (Start Position)



Figure 5 (Correct Posture)



Figure 6 (Incorrect Posture)