

Chapter 4 - CORE STRENGTHENING FOR GOLF

Core strengthening, or stability, is a real buzz word in the fitness industry at the moment, but unfortunately many exercises that are advocated to improve core strength do not target the right muscles. The muscles that constitute the core are the deep stabilising muscles of the spine, pelvis and shoulder blades, and require very specific training to be activated.

The role of the core stabilising muscles is to maintain a neutral position of the spine, pelvis and shoulder blades. This reduces the risk of injury and positions the body in way to facilitate optimal movement patterns and maximise muscle function. It is therefore essential that control of the true core stabilising muscles is achieved prior to progressing to more advanced strengthening and training exercises.

Gaining control of these muscles is important for golfers to allow them to maintain their posture during the swing, as well as to facilitate correct sequencing of their body parts during the swing. Strength and control of the core muscles will also reduce the risk of injury and reduce stress through the joints of the spine.

Training for the core muscles will be broken down into three categories:

1. *Core Strength – The Hip and Pelvis*
2. *Core Strength – The Trunk*
3. *Core Strength – The Shoulder Blades*

A series of exercises will be described at the end of the chapter, which are designed to take advantage of the gains made in the initial core strength exercises. These can be viewed as advanced core strength exercises, which should only be attempted once the initial exercises have been mastered.

Core Strength - The Hip and Pelvis

Clamshells

- The golfer lays on their side with hips and knees comfortably bent, upper hand resting on their hip bone.
- The golfer gently pushes their heels together and maintains this pressure throughout
- Allowing their toes to come apart, the golfer rotates the top knee up as far as possible, making sure that they do not let their hips rock backward
- The golfer continues to rotate their knee up and down in the last few degrees of movement until fatigued

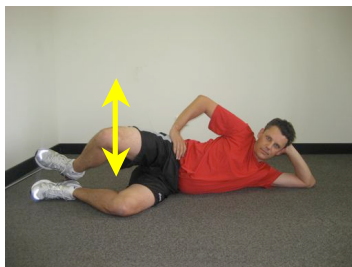


Figure 4 Knee Raises

- The golfer lays on their side with the bottom leg straight, top leg bent to 90°, foot resting on bottom knee
- Keeping their trunk steady and not allowing the pelvis to rock back, the golfer lifts the top knee up and down.



Bent Leg Knee Raises

- The golfer lays on their side with their hips bent to 70° in line with their body, knees bent to 90°
- Keeping the knee bent to 90° and shin parallel to the ground, the golfer raises the top knee up and down
- The golfer must keep their hips steady during the exercise



Side Lying Leg Raises

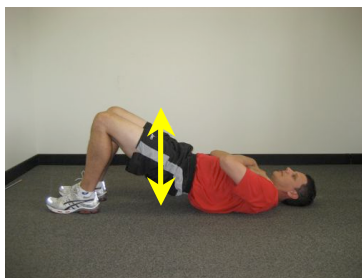
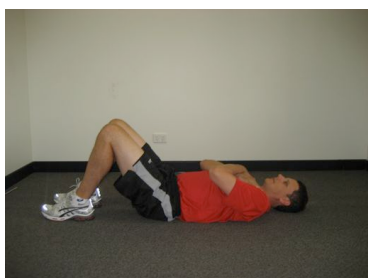
- The golfer lays on their side, legs out straight in line with their body
- Keeping their body steady, the body raises the top leg up and lengthens through the top leg, pushing their foot away from their body
- The golfer moves the top leg slightly behind them and raises the top leg up and down
- There should be no movement of the pelvis or lower back while performing this exercise



Bridges

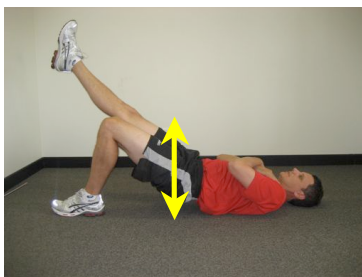
Level 1

- The golfer lays on their back with arms across chest, feet flat on the ground.
- The golfer squeezes their buttock muscles and lifts their hips off the ground, using their buttock muscles
- The golfer must not arch their back, and should feel that they are using their hamstrings
- The golfer continues to raise their hips up and down in a smooth, slow rhythm.



Level 2

- The golfer lays on their back with arms across chest, feet flat on the ground, then straightens 1 leg out
- Keeping knees level and using their buttock muscles as before, the golfer raises their hips up and down

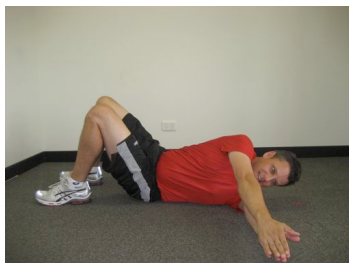
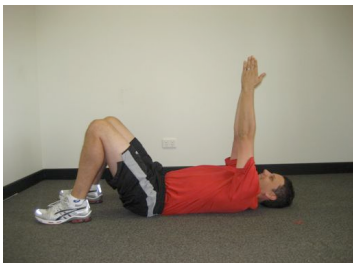


Core Strength - The Trunk

Trunk Rotation

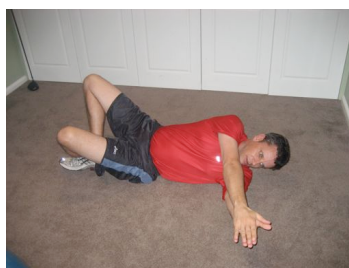
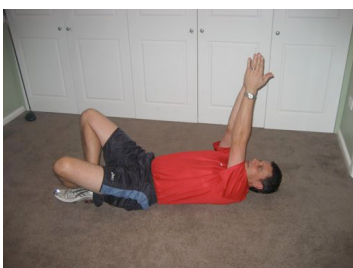
Level 1

- ▶ the golfer lays on their back with feet comfortably on the ground, arms straight, finger tips together
- ▶ the golfer rotates their chest side-to-side maintaining the triangle between arms and chest
- ▶ the golfer should keep their knees pointing up at all times
- ▶ the golfer rotates as far as possible while maintaining correct form
- ▶ Repeat 3 x 15



Level 2

- ▶ from the same starting position as above, the golfer crosses their feet over one another
- ▶ the golfer performs the same movement as before, maintaining control at all times
- ▶ Repeat 3 x 15



Level 3

- ▶ the golfer now rests their legs on a swiss ball, back flat on ground
- ▶ keeping legs relaxed and the ball still, the golfer attempts to perform the same movement as above
- ▶ Repeat 3 x 15



Side Crunches

- The golfer starts on their side, weight through 1 elbow, with knees bent to 90°, thighs in line with the trunk
- The golfer pushes through the elbow and knees to raise the hip off the ground, keeping the alignment of the thighs and trunk constant at all times



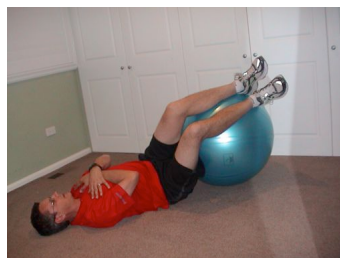
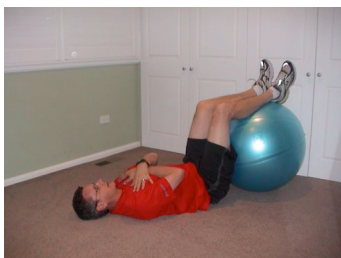
Swiss Ball Bird Dog

- The golfer starts laying over a swiss ball, light pressure through hands and toes.
- The golfer raises their opposite arm and leg, without putting any extra pressure through hands or toes
- The golfer must maintain a steady, straight spine as they perform the exercise
- The golfer holds this position for increasing periods of time, starting at 5 seconds



Leg Rolls

- The golfer lays on their back with arms across chest, legs resting on a swiss ball
- The golfer keeps their shoulder blades in place as they roll the ball side-to-side
- The golfer must keep their legs relaxed the whole time and use the abdominal muscles to control the movement



Core Strength - The Shoulder Blades

Prone Shoulder Blade Squeeze

- The golfer lays face down with their forehead resting on a rolled up towel, arms by the side with palms facing down
- The golfer draws the shoulder blades together and down towards the tailbone
- The golfer keeps the arms relaxed and raises them just off the ground
- The golfer holds this position for up to 30 seconds



Shoulder Blade Retraction

- The golfer stands holding a resistance band in both hands with arms straight out in front
- Keeping elbows straight, the golfer moves hands forward and backwards, allowing the shoulder blades to slide around their chest wall.
- The movement should be controlled by the muscles around the shoulder blades



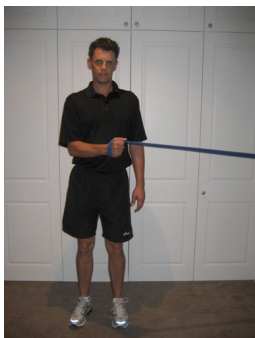
Prone External Rotation

- The golfer lies face down, forehead resting on a rolled up towel, arms out to side, elbows bent to 90°
- The golfer squeezes their shoulder blades together and maintains this throughout
- Keeping the elbows on the ground, the golfer raises the forearms off the ground and holds



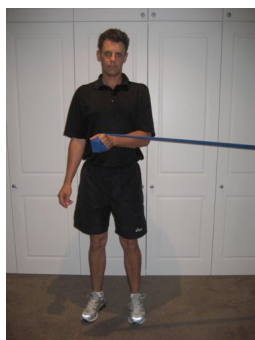
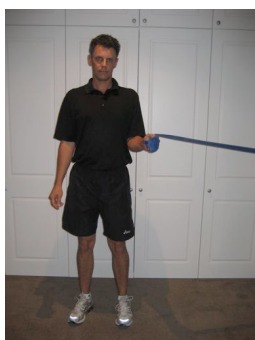
External Rotation

- Stand with upper arm by your side, holding elastic with forearm bent across chest
- Keep your elbow tight by your side at all times
- Rotate your arm out and back, controlling the movement throughout



Internal Rotation

- Stand with upper arm by your side holding elastic
- Keep your elbow tight by your side at all times
- Rotate your arm across your chest and back, controlling the movement throughout



Advanced Core Strength

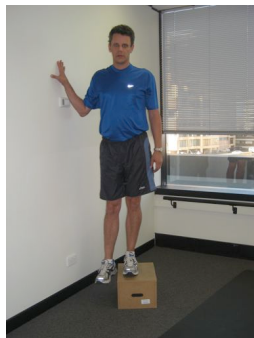
Russian Twist

- The golfer lays on a swiss ball, shoulders on the ball, feet flat on the ground and hips up
- The golfer starts with hands straight up, finger tips together
- Keeping the hips up at all times, the golfer rotates side-to-side, maintaining the triangle between arms and chest



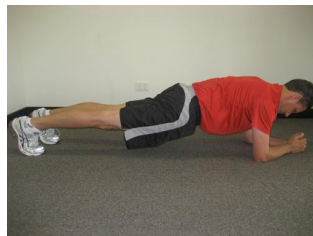
Hip Hitch

- The golfer stands on the edge of a step with 1 leg hanging free, they can rest a finger on a wall for support
- Without letting the stance knee bend or straighten, the golfer lowers and raises the free foot
- The golfer should keep the upper body relatively steady the whole time
- The movement should happen at the stance hip



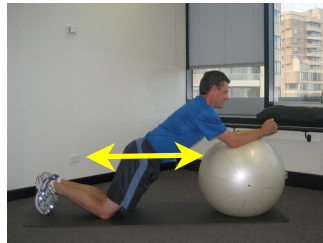
Prone Hold

- The golfer starts resting on both forearms and toes, forming a straight line from the shoulders to heels
- The golfer must keep shoulder blades back and down at all times
- During the hold the golfer must maintain the same posture at all times



Roll Outs

- The golfer starts on knees with forearms resting on a swiss ball, shoulders and elbows bent 90°
- Maintaining the same orientation between the arms and the body, the golfer rolls the ball out and in
- The golfer must straighten out through the hips as the roll the ball out
- The golfer must not lose control during the roll out and let their back sag.



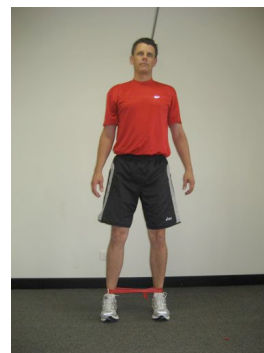
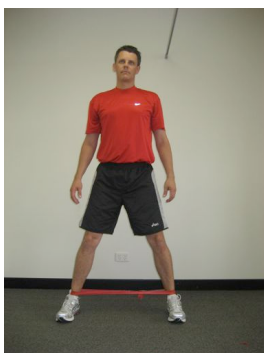
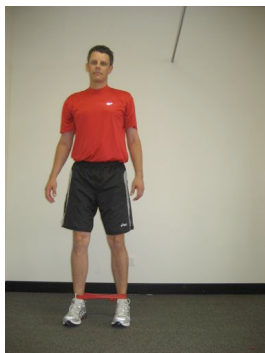
Squats

- The golfer stands with feet shoulder width apart, toes slightly pointed out with theraband around knees
- The golfer squats down with arms out in front, hips moving back and down, knees remaining stationary at all times with the shins staying vertical
- The golfer should not arch their back during the squat, their back should stay flat at all times, and they should feel their gluteal muscles in the back of their hips working.



5. Theraband Side Steps

- The golfer starts with theraband around their ankles
- The golfer steps side ways, taking a big step then little step to maintain tension in the band at all times.



Face Down Row with External Rotation

- The golfer lays face down over a swiss ball (or bench), holding a light weight in each hand
- The golfer pulls each arm up, squeezing the shoulder blades and bending the elbows to 90°
- The golfer then rotates the forearms up so the palms face down
- The golfer then reverses the movement to return to starting position



Ys - Ts - Ws

- The golfer lays face down over a swiss ball, arms 45° above head
- The golfer pumps their arms up and down 10 times, then moves their arms 90° out to the side
- The golfer pumps their arms up and down 10 times, then moves their arms tight into their side to form a W
- The golfer then pumps their arms up and down in this position



Golf Posture Single Leg Swiss Ball Squats

- The golfer stands in golf posture with 1 foot off the ground, knee pushing into a swiss ball against a wall
- Maintaining the pressure into the swiss ball, and body aligned in golf posture, the golfer squats up and down

