

Chapter 8 - POSTURE

Posture is the habitual position that people hold themselves in, whether they are sitting, standing, active or sedentary. The aim of good posture is to maintain the natural curves of the spine, this will minimize stress through the joints, ligaments and discs of the spine, as well as position muscles in ways that will facilitate their action. Good posture will therefore make all movements more efficient and is essential to any athletic activity, including golf.

If a golfer adopts poor posture in the address position, then all subsequent movement becomes a compensation to account for the less than ideal starting point. This will place the golfer at increased risk of injury, as well as make them less consistent and affect performance.

The habitual posture that anybody, especially an athlete, adopts will have significant influence over their movement patterns. In this way, ***what you do when you are doing nothing will influence what you do when you are doing something!*** In other words, if the golfer's habit is to sit in front of a computer screen with shoulders sagging, chin poked forward and back slouched, then when they go to the golf course they will address the golf ball with shoulders sagging, chin poked forward and back slouched ... not a good start. The body will very quickly adapt to the postures held in daily activities, resulting in stretched muscles becoming weak, tight muscles becoming stronger and faulty movement patterns being the consequence. It is essential therefore that good postural habits are learned and practiced so they become second nature. This will carry over to improved postural habits on the golf course and improved performance.

The following guidelines can be used to develop good postural habits.

Sitting

When sitting the golfer should:

- roll their pelvis forward so they are sitting on the bony prominences in the buttocks, the “sit bones”
- imagine that there is a string pulling through the top of the head, making them taller
- let their shoulder blades sit back and down
- have their feet flat on the ground, thighs parallel and hips slightly higher than their knees



When using a mouse on the computer, as well as the above points, the golfer should also:

- have their arms by their side
- bend their elbows to 90°, where their hand falls, that is where the mouse should be
- have the screen of the computer directly in front of them, screen slightly below eye level

When sitting the following commonly seen poor postural habits must be avoided:

- slouching into the back rest of a chair or couch
- rolling back to sit with weight through the flat bone at the base of the spine, the sacrum, rather than through the “sit bones”
- crossing 1 leg across the other, or crossing the ankles
- using a cordless mouse that is placed well in front of the golfer



Standing

When standing the golfer should:

- have their weight through their heels, evenly distributed on each foot
- let their knees remain soft
- imagine that there is a string pulling through the top of their head, making them taller
- let their shoulder blades sit back and down



When standing the following commonly seen poor postural habits must be avoided:

- placing weight through 1 leg and slouching into the hip joint, often seen with the golfer leaning on a golf club



- locking knees back and hips slouching forward, with shoulders also sagging



Postural Effects of Golf

Because golf is played in a forward bending posture, there is potential for negative postural side effects to result. Extended periods of playing or practicing, particularly short game practice, are most likely to cause these side effects. It is important for golfers to implement postural breaks during practice to reverse these effects. These postural breaks should reverse the forward bending posture of the golf swing, stretching the muscles in front of the body that are prone to be tight, as well as activating the muscles of the back and shoulders, that are stretched and prone to be weaker.

The following exercises are good examples of postural breaks for golfers, they should be performed each half an hour while practicing.

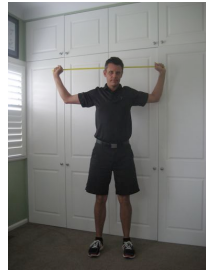
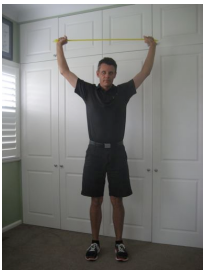
Hip Flexor/Side Stretch



- The golfer holds a golf club overhead, adopts a lunge position with 1 foot on the ground in front of the opposite knee.
- The golfer leans toward the front leg to increase the stretch.

The golfer should hold this position for 45 seconds

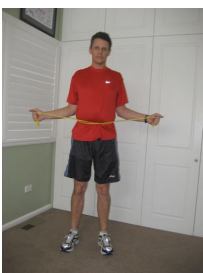
Shoulder Blade Activation



- The golfer holds a length of theraband overhead.
- The golfer pulls the theraband out and down, activating the muscles of the shoulder blade and holds for several seconds

The golfer should repeat this 15 times

Rotator Cuff Activation



- The golfer stands with a length of theraband around their waist
- The golfer holds each end of the band in each hand
- The golfer keeps their elbows tight by their side as they rotate their hands out
- The golfer repeats 10 repetitions

The golfer should repeat 3 sets of 10 repetitions

Golf Posture Shoulder Blade Activation



- The golfer stands in golf posture and places a golf club along the back of their shoulders
- The golfer rests their fingers lightly on the back of the club and squeezes their shoulder blades together
- The golfer holds this position for 20 seconds

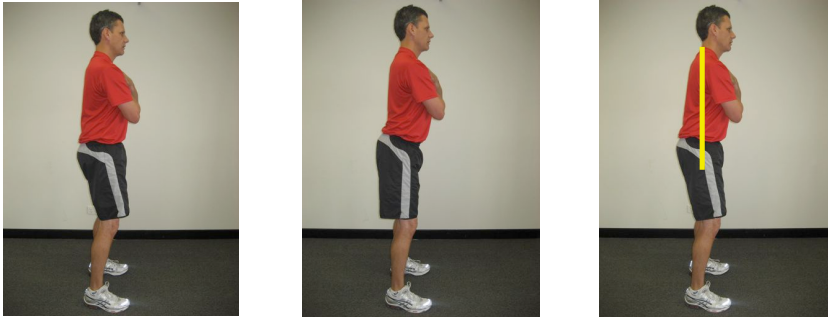
The golfer should repeat this 5 times

Finding Correct Golf Posture

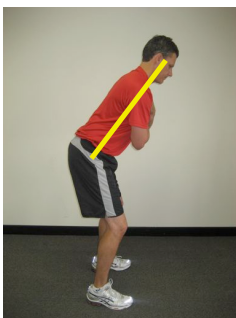
Finding correct posture for the address position is essential for good golf, as well as preventing golf related injuries.

The following procedure is the best way to get into correct golf posture, with activation of the appropriate muscles that will protect the spine.

Step 1 - The golfer stands erect and tilts their pelvis under as far as possible, then back as far as possible, then half way under again - this is the neutral position of the spine and pelvis



Step 2 - Maintaining this same position of the spine and pelvis, the golfer bends forward at the hips and unlocks their knees.



Alternatively

Step 2 - The golfer places a golf club in front of their chest, resting the butt of the grip under their nose and rests their chin on the grip. Maintaining this relationship, the golfer leans forward at the hips and unlocks the knees

