



Are your energy levels up for golf?

Ever wondered why some days you arrive at the golf club and feel your energy levels are low? You carry that flat feeling onto the course and everything seems amiss. Before you know it the chance of a good round has gone.

I think a lot of golfers are posturally and neurologically fatigued before they even tee off. Many wake up in the morning after sleeping in a foetal position for seven or eight hours. They'll have some breakfast, sit over a computer, get in the car and drive to the golf course, unaware of where their body's feels are at for that particular day.

When I'm speaking with golfers – whether tour professionals or amateurs at club level – I like to explain a concept I refer to as the '33-66-99% plan'. It's about making people aware of their energy levels as well as their feels, range of movement, endurance and body controls. If 99 per cent is your peak and when you feel sharp, then 33 per cent is when you feel sluggish, tired and fatigued physically.

In the accompanying graph, there is a checklist of performance indicators. Study those eight points to see why you may be tired before a round. It's a road map to show how to fire up your body for golf.

For example, make sure you drink enough fluids or have a light lunch before you play. And this is where my '5-Minute Warm-Up' is helpful. Go into the locker room and do the sequencing drills through your body. Make sure you cover your range and postural tone, plus dynamic rotational positions, which are closely associated with the golf swing.

If you're only at 66 per cent there's little point pushing yourself to maximum exertion (99 per cent) because it's only going to make you play worse. You have to work within that perceived level. It's a bit like doing a sprint session when you're really tired. You just wouldn't go to maximum effort, knowing you couldn't cope with the effort required.

Signs that your energy levels are low

When energy levels are low in the morning you'll find that a 4-iron doesn't fly as far as it normally does. (Consider a 3-iron for the equivalent distance.) There's a fair chance you haven't warmed up correctly. Or you may be thinking about other things, so you're not really concentrating. If your mind is all over the place on the practice putting green, you're probably ill equipped for a round of golf. The key is to reel in your expectations and realise the state of your body.

The best golfers in the world have similar body feels every day. And these feels are an integral part of their performance. Certainly a professional's ball flight and trajectory will vary slightly from one day to another. But they have an ability to

A new theory about self-monitoring your body for tournament play – the 33-66-99% plan.



Denmark's Soren Hansen is a student of the 33-66-99% plan.

notice a change on the practice range and accommodate it for that particular round.

The point I'm making is there's greater likelihood of losing your golf swing than finding it when you're tired or fatigued. For instance, your stock shot is likely to be more extreme. That fade is more of a slice. Or the five-metre draw is a bit of a hook. You may start to react by over-compensating on the opposite side or changing your grip or body position at address. You'll begin to fight that slice or hook, hence losing your natural swing tendency.

Try my 5-Minute Warm-Up and check the five feels: flexibility, posture and balance, kinetic chain, dynamic rotation and sequencing. If they're missing you're probably tired or not warmed up enough. And that comes back to the eight-point body map and the 33-66-99% plan.

Training yourself to raise body awareness

In a nutshell, 33-66-99% is self-discovery and execution. It's about finding your feels, energy levels, range of movement, endurance and controls on a particular day. Gradually build your 'library' of experiences of how to accommodate those things on the course.

However, you can improve body awareness in a golf-specific training program. I like to encourage golfers to exercise at three different speeds – 33-66-99%. Consider that when putting you're stroking the ball using 33 per cent effort. Swinging mid-irons is 66 per cent, while hitting driver/fairway woods is 99 per cent. While exercising you can start to internalise the speed control and execution that's required out on the golf course.

STUART FRANKLING/GETTY IMAGES

Instead of exercising at the same speed, try to 'work through' your bag of clubs. When running, vary the pace and length of stride. And the same with swimming and cycling, you can alter the stroke pattern and speed controls from 33-66-99. You're training different fibres – fast twitch, slow twitch. I think you'll discover a heightened awareness compared to simply doing a monotonous repetition like '10x10' with a pair of dumbbells.

In fact there are times when repetitions in the gym are detrimental. Repetitions focus on the external effort of just doing something a certain number of times (a bit like 'scooping balls' when practising). If you apply the 33-66-99 rule you will internalise the speed control and effort required to do the task you are setting in the gym.

And at the same time, go through the checklist of self-assessment. Ask yourself, 'What energy level do I have right now?' 'How does today's range of movement compare to my maximum range or benchmark?' Hold positions to determine postural endurance. Is it 33, 66 or 99? Test your concentration levels. Assess your ability to co-ordinate movement. Think quality not quantity.

It keeps the exercises 'fresh'. Some of my players will do the same exercise in seven different ways. They're gaining

more functionality because it's multi-tasking the body. And that's what you need to do in golf – because every shot is different in terms of speed of swing, length of swing and type of swing.

Quick fixes during competition

The whole purpose of 33-66-99 is about trying to attain and maintain good motor patterns throughout a round of golf. It's very easy to fall back into an old motor pattern. Say, for instance, your left hip drops. I would encourage a player to try something different, like 'stomping' on the ground or bending the left knee to 90-degree hip flexion and pushing it against his golf bag. This would help to 'fire' the left gluteal muscle. Or, if a player felt a little tight on the right side, he could try a flexibility drill between shots. Stretching the trunk and hip on the tight side but making sure you keep to the allocated 33-66-99 range.

It's very important to try to walk properly on the golf course in order to maintain 'form'. A lot of our guys actually wear rubber knee bands during practice rounds so they can feel the 'Golf Christmas Tree' muscles while they're walking. The knee bands help to fire the gluteal muscles, which are the major muscles to retain balance and control through the pelvis.

If you start walking badly it will have an adverse affect on your set-up in the golf swing. You may hit the ball well on the driving range but the sheer act of walking brings in another level of fatigue. If the glute muscles aren't working you'll start to 'list', which affects how you approach the next shot.

Consider that you're on the golf course for about four hours during a round. If you normally shoot 80 and a golf swing takes 1½ seconds, what is your body doing for the other three hours and 58 minutes?

That's why it is important to perform little 'circuit breakers' between shots when you start to feel your form going off. And that's where the 33-66-99% plan comes in again. By working at different speeds while training it actually heightens awareness.

I've found the 33-66-99% plan to be a powerful tool with players. Under the pump, even if they're feeling tired, they know they've got more fuel in reserve.

For more information about the 5-Minute Warm-Up and golf-specific training, contact Ramsay McMaster on 0407 432 282 or Melbourne Golf Injury Clinic on (03) 9569 9448.



Self-monitoring your body for tournament golf

Tournament week=_____ Tournament/course location=_____ Country=_____ Average climate=_____

Self-assess your body for tournament weeks	Development Day Monday 33-66-99% Comments	Development Day Tuesday 33-66-99% Comments	Simulation Day Wednesday 33-66-99% Comments	Match Day Thursday 33-66-99% Comments	Match Day Friday 33-66-99% Comments	Match Day Saturday 33-66-99% Comments	Match Day Sunday 33-66-99% Comments	Post Comp Till Monday 33-66-99% Comments
1. Hydration								
2. Nutrition								
3. Sleep								
4. "Feel" and "Awareness"								
5. Energy Levels								
6. Flexibility and Mobility								
7. Postural Endurance								
8. Speed and Control								

Please record relevant % and or comments in above table. What service do you require this week?

Text	E-mail	Skype	Phone	Conference	PowerPoint
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