



Five drills for better posture

By using a posture bar, golfers can engage in specific exercises designed to enhance the golf swing. And you don't need to go to the gym to work out.

IMPORTANT: Before you do these exercises, talk through them with your local trainer or physiotherapist. If you have any existing injuries, I strongly recommend that you do these exercises under supervision. And if you experience sharp pain or soreness, stop immediately.



DRILL 1 – Trunk and Upper-Body Stretch

onto a hook that is rivetted to a wall or it can be fitted firmly onto the top of a door.)

The benefit of a posture bar is that it allows you to build strength through resistance in the tubing. Because the tubing is like a thin rubber hose, you can feel the resistance – unlike with dead weight. You can make a drill as hard or easy as you like. It's a very good prop for working the 'finesse' muscles in the golf swing. By loosening the tubing and therefore the resistance, you can enhance your feels for the short game. Or, you can tie more resistance into the tubing to strengthen the more explosive muscles used for the long game.

Here, I've selected five posture bar exercises that can form the basis of a golf-specific strength and conditioning program. After using each posture bar drill, simulate a golf swing using a club or the posture bar itself. Using mirrors throughout the sessions also reinforces good swing patterns.

DRILL 1 – Trunk and Upper-Body Stretch

Place a spiky ball just above your right hip and lean against the wall. Holding a posture bar with both arms above your head, extend your right leg behind the left. Then, slowly make a side bend to your left by pulling the posture bar down with your left hand. Maintain the stretch for 15 seconds. For right-handed golfers, do three repetitions on the right side and two repetitions on the left. Vice-versa for left-handers.

This drill alleviates 'crunch factor' – the pressure through your spine in the golf swing. It breaks that bad pattern, opening up the body and giving you more time through the backswing and transition to impact.

DRILL 2 – Neck Stability Rotation

Attach the rubber tubing to a hook on a wall or fitting on top of a door. Make sure it's secure, before extending your arms and putting your fingertips on top of the posture bar. Adopt a squat position to resemble address, keeping your back straight and knees flexed (so as not to make any compensatory movements). Slightly waggle the posture bar, so that you can feel your shoulder and abdominal muscles. Then, rotate your neck slowly to one side. Hold for 15 seconds. Repeat on the other side.

This drill allows you to collectively work seven muscles groups, which I call the 'Golf Christmas Tree' (1. neck stabilisers, 2. triceps, 3. lower trapezius/scapular muscles, 4. lower and deep abdominals, 5. posterior gluts, 6. inner quads and adductors, 7. pelvic floor).

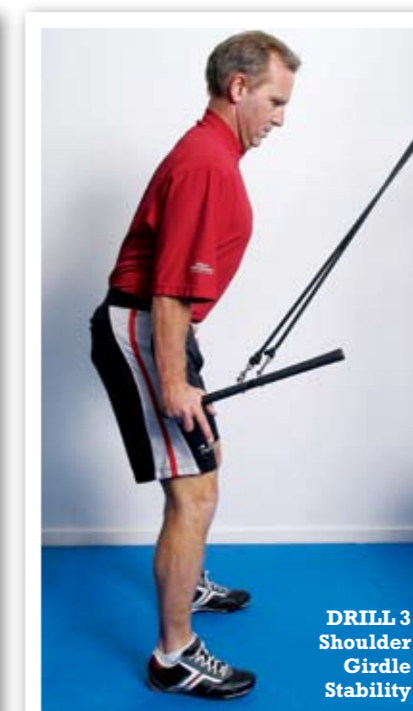
When you are in the right posture you can feel the seven layers of the tree coming together. Apart from promoting a good set-up position, the drill stabilises the neck, which undergoes a lot of force at impact. It accentuates a smooth flow on the backswing and through into the downswing.

DRILL 3 – Shoulder Girdle Stability

I recommend that you start with one posture bar, before adding a



DRILL 2 Neck Stability Rotation



DRILL 3 Shoulder Girdle Stability



DRILL 5 Full Body Dynamic Set-Up

second for this drill. Turn your fingers outwards with elbows tucked in by your sides. Adopt a pistol grip and 'Sergeant Major pose'. Pull the posture bar downwards, keeping your upper body stable. There should be no flexing or shoulder curl.

This is a counterbalance exercise because most golfers are dominant on one side. That means for a right-handed golfer, the drill is intended to strengthen the left arm. So you'll need to do more repetitions on the left side. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat twice. And then do two on the right side.

It promotes upper body stability and allows greater control with the leading arm in connection with the body through transition and impact. You'll get a stronger feeling of sequencing (in other words, the co-ordination between the upper and lower body).

DRILL 4 – Lumbar Rotation

Lie on the floor with a spiky ball at the base of your skull. Rest a posture bar between the inside of your knees, which are at 90 degrees, perpendicular to your hips. Tuck in your chin, outstretch your arms and adopt a pistol grip. Then, slowly rotate laterally from side to side, moving the posture bar between 5-10cm. You should feel tension just below your belly button and inside thighs. Don't worry about the distance you're able to move the bar. You're trying to maintain control of it and shouldn't be hitching the bar up or down. Hold for 10 seconds either side. And compare your right rotation with the left.

Most golfers tend to use their upper body to rotate. This drill promotes lumbar rotation and enhances pelvic and lower body stability in the swing. It allows you to feel the inner thighs, the lower body segment working with the trunk, which facilitates good sequencing. By using the correct muscles in the trunk, you'll notice more 'firing' in the golf swing. Placing a spiky ball under your neck will act to prevent compensatory movements. The ball will accentuate the feeling of your spine, giving a greater appreciation of the spine position when it is under load.

DRILL 5 – Full Body Dynamic Set-Up

Place the posture bar behind you, having attached the rubber tubing to a wall/door. Place your fingertips on top with palms facing the front of your body, towards the golf ball. Keeping a good spine angle, pull the posture bar down behind your buttocks, feeling the Christmas Tree muscles at work. Slowly waggle the bar. Then, lift each heel, then toes off the ground. Lift one foot off the ground, then the other, while wagging the posture bar. Try some neck rotation from side to side. I recommend you do this drill three times, for 15 seconds apiece.

This fifth and final exercise will get you ready to play, firing up all of the seven golf muscle groups. It gets you away from sloppy posture, especially if you've been sitting in the office or behind a steering wheel for much of the week. By establishing a dynamic posture, it sets up the spine for golf and promotes good co-ordination of the body through the chain.

Posture bars and spiky-ball starter kits can be purchased from The Melbourne Golf Injury Clinic on (03) 9569 9448. For advice on a golf-specific training program, contact Ramsay McMaster on 0407 432 282 or e-mail golfphysio@ozemail.com.au



DRILL 4 Lumbar Rotation

KIMBAL BAKER (6)