



BY RAMSAY McMASTER, WITH ROHAN CLARKE

actual golf swing, it should take a minimum of 15 minutes, twice a day. Many elite players would exercise between 1½ and 2 hours per day when they're not competing on tour. The more serious player should do a proper warm-up and warm-down before hitting balls as well as performing 'circuit breakers' during practice. That is, posture exercises that take 5-10 minutes to break up fixed-movement patterns (e.g. a hunched-over putting stance). Note: it's not just about getting fit for golf. The more you practise, the more



important it is to counter the one-sided muscle imbalances created by the golf swing.

**Q. Where can I perform these exercises and drills?**

A golf-specific training program can be done in a park, an office or your own home. It doesn't have to be in a gym. Your physiotherapist will be able to suggest appropriate training aids. I recommend a 'Golfer's Survival Kit' (\$195) that you can use anytime or anywhere. It contains two spiky balls, a posture bar, rubber knee band, posture belt and a bag.

**Q. Where is the proof to show that golf-specific drills actually work?**

We've done a lot of work through three-dimensional biomechanical analysis that measures human movement patterns and sequencing of the body. From using the balls, bars, bands and belts, we've seen a massive improvement in players of all ability levels. In particular, tour players tell us they 'respond' to the drills and it's been shown through their results on the course. Personally, I've had enormous feedback from patients at the Melbourne Golf Injury Clinic where we've performed at least 75,000 golf-related treatments.

**Q. How do I make sure a practitioner is properly qualified?**

The physio should be a state-registered physiotherapist, which

means they should have SRP and MAPA as credentials. A golf coach should be a member of the Professional Golfers Association of Australia. The PGA has its own grading system, which means there are levels of qualification based upon experience.

**Q. You seem to work with a lot of tour players and elite amateurs. Aren't your drills too advanced and sophisticated for an 18-handicapper?**

On the contrary, we modify the drills for different levels of golfer and work safely within their capabilities. We reduce the resistance, endurance and repetitions, depending upon the person's threshold. (We're not using heavy weights and doing heaps of bench presses.) Golf-specific training is all about quality control of movement (through compression, rotation and sequencing).

Furthermore, amateurs can get even more out of a program because their ratio of improvement is far greater compared to a tour player. This factor can also reduce the incidence of injury and help address common problems associated with amateur golfers of all ages and handicaps.

I would also emphasise that 75 per cent of our business at MGIC is treating juniors and social players between the ages of 30 and 60, male and female. So we work with seven levels of golfer: tour players, development-level tour players, elite amateurs, PGA professional coaches and trainees, social/corporate golfers, juniors and seniors.

**Q. I want my teenager to get the best advice about fitness for golf. Who should they see once their body stops growing?**

Firstly, teenagers should try a number of sports so they don't get stuck in one movement pattern. Different sports recruit different muscle groups and promote co-ordination as well as strength and skill acquisition. They will also keep it fun and interesting. It's important not to be too serious, too early.

From the ages 7-9, I recommend parents should consult a local physiotherapist to give their child a postural assessment. The physio can provide two or three exercises to act as 'circuit breakers' to correct sedentary and flexed movement patterns. Once children start to have growth spurts, between the ages of 12 and 16, they should have further visits. It's a bit like going to the dentist. Then if they have a desire to get serious about their golf, they should see a golf-specific physiotherapist for a postural and musculo-skeletal screening. More intervention is recommended once the child gets to a certain 'training age' and commits to intensive golf practice and tournament participation.

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Ramsay will answer more FAQs in a coming issue. To send him a question, e-mail ([golfphysio@ozemail.com.au](mailto:golfphysio@ozemail.com.au)). If it's published you'll receive a complimentary 'Golfer's Survival Kit'. Meanwhile, to sign up for his 'Golf Fitness Camp', call the Melbourne Golf Injury Clinic on (03) 9569 9448.