

FIT FOR GOLF *Part 3*

How to find that an 10% that makes the difference between a good round of golf and a great round of golf.

Previous articles in this series have focused on how to 'get fit' to play golf without physical duress and thereby avoid injury. As with any sport there are certain technical skills that must be mastered to produce the basic requirements of a game, and then there are more advanced skills to take your game to exciting but achievable levels. Golf demands high levels of concentration to co-ordinate 18 holes of play, each hole being a new challenge, presenting vastly different hazards, and potentially creating 72 or more disasters or opportunities in the offing.

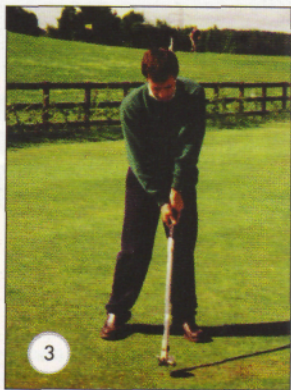
So, how can you give yourself a 10% increase in confidence when tackling these often 'round killing' confrontations with the golf course? Easy. With strong hands!

The easiest method of assessing the grip strength is to use a grip dynamometer which will give the exact measurement of the force exerted by squeezing at maximal intensity. It is not a coincidence that some of the best scorers in this test have been by golfers who have well-developed forearms such as Nickolas, Player, Faldo, Daley, Woods etc. By having strong hands these players can moderate, or increase pressure on the shaft to accelerate/decelerate the club head in numerous situations. In addition, the transfer of energy from the work done by the legs, hips and shoulders can be maximized and not lost by early or late wrist breaking at a crucial time in the swing, or on contact with the ball.

Before starting the following exercises lift pelvis, squeeze stomach muscles below navel, and hold throughout the duration of the exercise. This strengthens the stomach and increases torso stability. (Repeat for all exercises)

Exercise 1: Back stability for increased shoulder and forearms strength

Grip clubs (two or three depending on hand size), assume normal stance, lift clubs and take to the end of the swing (hold 10 secs), move to mid position (hold 10 secs), move to contact point (hold 10 secs). Repeat 5 times (reps) x 3 sets with 2-3 mins between sets. Small weights can be added to the club heads as strength increases.



Exercise 2: Increased grip strength to help reduce elbow injuries

Start by gripping a club in the middle of the shaft (photos 1 & 2), hold horizontal to ground (90° to torso). Rotate 180° slowly with control, at the end position reverse and return to the original starting position. As you improve move the grip towards the end of the club (photos 3 & 4) and increase rotation to 270°. Repeat 5 times (reps) x 3 sets with 2-3 mins between sets.



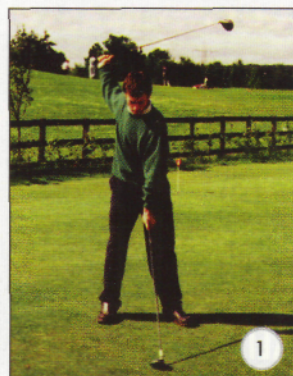
This issue's exercise tip

Before hitting each shot, try taking four or five controlled deep breaths, along with a similar number of shoulder shrugs. You'll be amazed how this simple method of relaxation can improve your concentration and prevent stiffness in the shoulders and neck muscles.

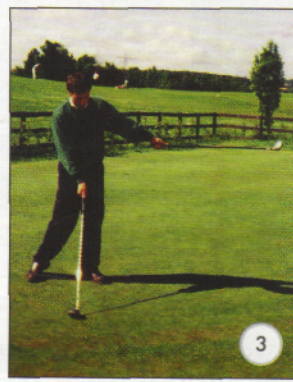
Over the years Andy Vince has worked with a number of individuals and teams in different sports, primarily in the area of body strengthening and conditioning. The most recent work of note is with the Scottish Cricket team, who competed with such distinction against the might of Australia, Pakistan, New Zealand and Bangladesh in the one-day World Cup series this summer.

Exercise 3: Strength, fitness, flexibility and rhythm

1. Start with short irons, and progress to driver and woods. As with your normal swing (right arm) take club to end position. Leave left arm in position with head and eyes in line with the spot where the ball would be placed (photo 1).



2. Swing the right arm with control until almost in contact with club head of the club in your left hand (photo 2), then pick up club in the left hand and bring to an open position as you would with your follow-through (photo 3).



3. Sweep the club in your right hand through the ball-contact position (photo 4).



4. Continue until both clubs are almost together in the final body position (photo 5).

5. Return to original position by unwinding and reversing the swing. Repeat 10 times x 5 sets.

