

# Do You Know Your Golf Posture?

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A good physical therapy evaluation always begins with a full postural assessment. An individual's positional alignment from all angles can yield valuable clues regarding potential muscle imbalances and functional limitations. A proper Golf Fitness Screen starts by analyzing the golfer's address position.

An excessive arch in the lower back (Figure A) can be an indication of weak abdominals and tight hip flexors and can make it challenging to maintain proper posture throughout the golf swing. A more rounded spine angle (Figure B) often indicates a lack of extension and rotational mobility. Basic exercises (shown below) which address these postural faults can yield an immediate improvement in back pain and swing mechanics.

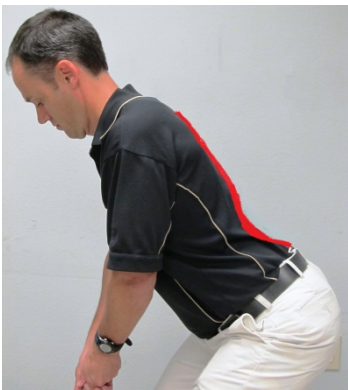


Figure A

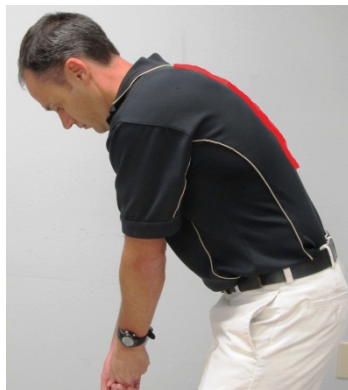


Figure B

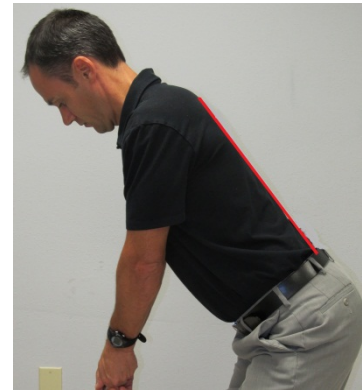


Figure C (normal)

It is important to point out that the postural assessment is only the first step, and to get a true sense of a golfer's physical limitations, movement screens must be performed. The golf screen goes on to look at mobility *and* stability throughout the pelvis, torso, hips and shoulders. In order to generate torque and power, you must have adequate rotational mobility, but you must also demonstrate the ability to **stabilize** each individual segment. This allows you to fire muscles in the correct sequence and more effectively builds momentum leading up to impact with the ball. Stability is also critical for consistency. Stability comes primarily from core strength in the abdominals and lower back and hip musculature and is paramount, but often deficient. Identifying and addressing these strength and flexibility deficiencies can prevent injuries, make your swing more efficient, and allow you to continue golfing well into your "later years". Once you have a specific exercise program to address your physical limitations, your pro will have a much easier job correcting your swing faults.

The Titleist Performance Institute (TPI) has been leading the way in golf fitness and rehabilitation for many years. They have developed a detailed Golf Fitness Screen which looks at balance, flexibility and strength (stability) from head to toe. This type of "Functional Movement Screen" is gaining popularity in the professional ranks in all sports and yields more useful information than traditional static tests of strength and flexibility. TPI has been fine tuning their functional screen for a number of years and applying it to golfers at all levels, from amateurs to tour players, with great success. TPI certifies golf professionals, medical professionals and strength and conditioning specialists to promote a team approach to addressing physical limitations and swing faults in one comprehensive system. After identifying these impairments, TPI golf and fitness professionals can collaborate with medical professionals, such as a physical therapist, to properly address limitations through manual techniques and therapeutic exercise.

TPI's Philosophy of the Swing – "We don't believe there is one way to swing a club; we believe there are an infinite number of ways to swing a club. But we do believe that there is one efficient way for everyone to swing and it is based on what they can physically do."

With age, pain, or injury, posture can change and we can lose spinal mobility. We could all benefit from the exercises below which address spinal mobility related to posture. This is a great starting point for a golf-related exercise program. Once you have mastered these, you can progress to more advanced exercises focusing on core stabilization, strength and rotational mobility.

“Cat/Camel” – to improve spine/pelvic mobility. While on your hands and knees, practice “arching and rounding” your back.



Also practice “arching and rounding” your lower spine while standing in your address position.



For improved posture and spinal extension, lie on a foam roller or therapy ball for 3-5 minutes/day with arms outstretched.



For more information on the TPI system and other helpful tips, visit [www.mytpi.com](http://www.mytpi.com) and locate a TPI certified professional near you!



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