

GOLF STRENGTH: PART II

BY: EVERETT AABERG

Obtaining greater levels of strength is obviously an important goal to be included in any comprehensive exercise program. As we presented in past articles, strength is one of the “Base Bio-Motor Abilities” that is critical to develop at a proportional level in order to make significant improvements in any of the “Performance Abilities” such as speed, power and agility. This is particularly true when wishing to improve sport performance and is a well known principle for any strength coach or trainer. A less known fact is that a lack of strength or a strength imbalance can also negatively impact other Base Abilities as well such as restricting one’s endurance, promoting joint instability and is always related to limited mobility or poor flexibility. (See past articles on “Stretching the Truth”) It is also important to understand that the type of strength gained in the gym utilizing our traditional models of strength development do create the type of strength needed to improve in a particular sport. Unfortunately research shows that the more contemporary “functional strength” training protocols that are popular today also are showing little promise developing strength types that transfer towards sports performance or even meeting the demands of an active life style outside the gym.

As discussed in the last article, there are 7 distinct types of strength that can be developed within a well designed and periodized training program “Sports-Specific” training takes some detailed planning as any sport will require a specific blend of least 2-3 of the possible strength types depending on the unique demands of the sport itself. More over, as discussed in past articles, an effective exercise program is not just “Sport-Specific” but more importantly, must also be “Person-Specific” and address the individual’s own inimitable collection of postural deviations, muscular imbalances and other Bio-Motor Ability deficiencies. Therefore, as stated in prior articles, efficient exercise selection for cultivating the strength types most beneficial begins with a comprehensive assessment of the individual. Once these priorities are identified, then we can consider additional training strategies and select exercises that also help meet the demands of the specific sport.

Obtaining optimal “Golf-Strength” requires a blend of “Stability-Strength”, “Speed-Strength” and “Explosive Strength”. This necessitates implementing a long term training program with planned and systematic changes in volume, intensity, and recovery. The program must also account for specific adjustments needed to exercise techniques such as utilizing specific tempos, altering stability demands, and modifying movement patterns that all correlate with each phase of the training program. However, what is more critical to success is the exercise selection itself. The body is precise in its adaptations and it is the exact exercise movements along with the specific alignment of forces, positioning options, path of motion, speed of motion and range of motion performed for each exercise that will dictate what benefits and types of strength that can actually be transferred from the gym to the turf. Consequently, the thought process utilized for choosing exercises or modifying techniques is crucial. Yet this task is most often underestimated, misguided and frequently performed through random selection with little or no scientific methodology applied.

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perform on unstable platforms. Once resistance is added, the amount, the angle, and its concurrent combination with gravitational forces must immediately be considered as all resultant forces are now skewed and the actual mechanical adaptations therefore are also changed accordingly. On top of this, the speed of motion, range of motion, and exact path of motion that the exercise produces will also affect the way in which any strength adaptations will transfer outside the gym. It is also important to note that training strength on balance boards, Bosus, Swiss Balls, or other stability tools develops a type of “titling-response reflex” that does not transfer well to the “body-righting reflex” adaptations that are the most beneficial for golf or the majority of other sports. Consequently, rather than simply attempt to perform what appears to be a golf-looking type exercise, seek to effectively choose exercises and train specific movement patterns that improve strength, stability as well as mobility of the joints themselves with particular emphasis on the hip, trunk and shoulder girdles with also attention to improving foot-ankle action as well as wrist action.

Once appropriate exercises are chosen it may also be important to plan an unbalanced frequency and volume of certain exercises over others as well as perform more on one side verses the other in order to correct present muscular imbalances of the individual. Corrective exercises are always a part of a performance program and can be either isolated movements that target a specific muscular weakness or contain a more complex movement pattern that targets an entire muscular subsystem in order to correct postural deviations and pelvic-spinal movement limitations. All of which is necessary for the athlete to improve in their sport as well as avoid future injury. Our next article will present examples of such exercises that are suited to addressing common muscular imbalances and more apt to produce increased “Golf Strength”. Such exercises may be important to substitute for other exercises you are currently doing or possibly simply added to your present training programs. In order to receive a more personalized training program to develop “Golf-Strength” as well as attend to all other individual performance and fitness needs, be sure to contact a TELOS member experience representative to schedule a complimentary Ortho-Kinetics Assessment. They can be reached at 972-386-2580 and be sure to mention this article and the NTPGA.