

Golf Health and fitness

Article: Are Golfers athletes?

When you mention the word golf to individuals who are just observers and not players, they see it as a country club event that requires minimal exertion or athletic ability. Some have argued that it is not a sport because it lacks the physical contact of football, the up and down the court running, jumping and fast pace style of basketball, or the non stop action such as in soccer.

By definition an athlete is someone who possesses strength, agility coordination and stamina. This someone also has skills to overcome obstacles and can react to multiple sources of stimuli(such as a running back must fight off forces from all sides keep his balance and have the strength stamina and the agility to run over and around people in a split second). A golfer must have some of these physical characteristics to perform well.

What these critics don't realize is the coordination, stability, strength and accuracy that it takes to drive a golf ball say 250 yards, taking into consideration the speed that the clubhead is traveling (possibly 100 mph), down a narrow fairway, avoiding bunkers, water, trees and even the playing conditions, and eventually getting it to drop into a small hole in 4 just to make par. Then you add in the shear forces that are placed on the spine during rotation around a fixed vertical axis, and the strength and balance that is required by every joint in the body per unit of time that passes by during the swing to consistently achieve accurate drives, I would say that it takes athletic ability to become proficient at this sport.

With this in mind to be good and stay healthy, golfers need to train the body to coordinate movement patterns by challenging the neuromuscular system with exercises that have a high carry over to golf.

Going to the gym on a regular basis and working with equipment that can challenge your neuromuscular system like swiss balls, medicine balls, balance boards, cable machines and bungee-type elastic cords are good sources. Challenge yourself on uneven surfaces since golf is played on uneven grounds. Machines make your neuro system weak, since there is little to no communication going on since you are only moving in 1 plane and the movement doesn't require any balance or coordination, so then this will not help your golf performance.

I have a few clients that are seriously trying to make it to the tour, but want to be trained both as a golfer and an athlete. The rewards were substantial for them because they rarely complained of fatigue after playing a 3 day tournament, nor were they physically sore, in fact I had 1 golfer who had just completed a tournament and wanted to do a 1 hour plyometric workout with me. The stamina of these golfers are excellent.

The point I'm trying to make here is that golfers are like athletes because of the physical, technical and mental similarities that they have in common with other athletes to overcome obstacles in order to perform at their highest level. Even though the sport

might be different, training for optimal flexibility, strength coordination stamina to increase performance and decrease injuries is something that they all have in common.

Here are some examples of neuromuscular exercises that require coordination and increase strength and stability.



Static posture hold



Dynamic Trunk rotation

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