

Golf Health and Fitness

Article: Closed vs Open Chain Exercises for golfers

In previous articles I would bring up the fact that in order for performance on the golf course to improve the exercise selection must be golf specific. I don't mean that you should be swinging a weighted golf club around and expect to gain quick results. There is a science behind training correctly so that performance can be achieved without getting injured.

I have always believed that if you train for flexibility first, then stability that strength and power would soon follow. Most of us want to see and feel results right away, so they opt not to try this formula, and would rather lift heavy to satisfy their needs. Well as you should know that if you put the roof on the house, and the foundation is weak, you will soon have a collection of rubble to pick up from the ground. The body should be looked at the same way. Why lift for strength first when you don't even have the foundation to support it. The next thing to remember is to train not strain. In other words don't push your workouts to the point that you are straining to finish a program because the volume and intensity is too high, and be smart when you train.

This brings us now to an approach that is important to know as your program has moved away from isolating muscle groups and now integrating into functional movement patterns becomes important.

Let's talk about open versus closed chain training. The concept of the kinetic chain deals with the functional anatomical relationships that exist in the upper and lower extremities. The closed kinetic chain involves the weight bearing relationship between the foot ankle lower leg, knee, thigh and hip, while for the upper extremity it is the relationship between the wrist hand elbow and shoulder. In open chain, the extremities are free to move and do not make contact with the ground. Closed kinetic chain exercises use isometric, concentric and eccentric contractions which must occur in different muscle groups within the chain and at the same rate. Exercise examples are minisquats, pushups, leg presses and the use of balance boards. Open chain exercise examples involve doing a wood chop for the upper extremities and tossing a medicine ball, because closed chain exercises are more specific to the sport because they resemble movement patterns approximate to that sport and since there is such a high carryover to specificity it is this approach that is highly accepted over open chain.

For golfers training the upper extremities in an open chain environment and the lower extremities in a closed chain position would be of great value, again because of the carryover that it can offer you. The wood chop exercise is a perfect example of how using a closed chain technique for the lower extremities can produce strength throughout the chain.

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