

Getting your golf swing back to mid-season form after a long winter (2014-04-01)

After a long winter layoff from golfing it may be a good idea to do a few golf exercises and drills before playing that first round of golf this spring. If you have not been stretching the golf muscles over the winter it may be very difficult to execute your best golf swing this spring.

In a full golf swing it is vital to turn the shoulders to create a wide swing arc and maximize your distance. The problem I see with many golfers coming out of the winter is that they are tight and instead of making a good full shoulder turn they lift the club with the arms causing a swing arc that is too vertical (too much up and down and not enough around the body). This lack of proper shoulder turn leads to a steep downswing causing many golfers to dig the club head into the ground or hit behind the ball.

Here is a great exercise / drill to ensure a good full shoulder turn this spring:

Place a longer golf club behind your neck with the shaft resting on top of both shoulders. Position your hands on the shaft about 10" outside each shoulder. Hold the shaft in your fingers. Tilt the spine slightly forward as you would in a good set-up position. Now, keeping your feet flat on the ground turn your left shoulder (for right handed golfer) so the shaft moves toward the ball which would be positioned near the center of your stance (see photo). You can use your left hand to help push the shaft to reach your maximum shoulder turn. Hold the full shoulder turn for a few seconds after each turn going back.

After making several full shoulder turns you may now shift your weight left and unwind the shoulders going into your follow through so that your chest faces slightly left of the target transferring all your weight onto the left foot. The right foot will pivot so that only your big toe is touching the ground. If you maintain your balance you should have a pretty good looking finish.

Making a good full shoulder turn this spring will widen your swing arc making it much easier to swing your irons along the ground with a shallow divot in front of the ball.

When practicing and playing this spring it is very important that the divot is in front of the ball and the face of your iron hits the ball first. This is especially important in the spring when the ground is very soft. An iron shot that strikes the soft wet ground before the ball will kill your club head speed reducing the normal distance of the shot up to 75%. In the summer when the ground is firm an iron shot hitting the ground first may somewhat slide into the ball not affecting the reduced distance as much.

There is a good swing drill that will ensure you do not hit behind the ball that you can do in your yard or at the range before you go play that first round of the golf. Scratch a 3 foot straight line in the grass with a tee or similar object, making sure the line is visible. Take your set-up with an iron, placing the front of the line in the middle of your stance with the rest of the line extending in front of you which would dissect the ball if the ball was there. Position the leading edge of the club face on the line and from there start making your practice swings. If you are making a good swing the shallow divot will only appear in front of the line on the target side. If your club head is entering the ground in front of the line you may not be shifting your weight to the left enough in your downswing or you may be starting the hands too soon in the downswing causing the wrist to un-cock too early. Also, as mentioned earlier a good full shoulder turn with a good finish will prevent you from hitting behind the ball.

Using these two simple drills will increase your chances of striking the ball more solid on the golf course this spring. Getting your game back to mid-season form now will make those spring rounds of golf much more enjoyable.



Looking forward to seeing you this spring on the course or practice range.

Bob Collins, PGA
Golf Instruction & Player Development
www.BobCollinsGolf.com

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