

Five key exercises for senior golfers



Physical therapist John D'Amico has a volunteer demonstrate the correct position for a hip stretch.

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For most older golfers, doing a few knee bends and shoulder swings on the first tee is about the extent of their warm-up routine. And that's fine for the short term.

But John D'Amico, a Naples, Fla.-based physical therapist believes in order to keep playing long after retirement, senior golfers need to work harder to maintain what strength, stamina and power you have left -- because after a certain age, it's almost impossible to make great gains in physical fitness.

If you don't have it by then, D'Amico said, you won't be able to regain it.

SENIOR GOLFERS: [Three modifications you can make to your game](#) (<http://www.pga.com/news/news-feature/three-tips-senior-golfers-looking-improve-their-game>)

"Fitness for life after 50 isn't about making great gains," said D'Amico, who owns [Golf Fitness Edge](http://www.golffitnessedge.com) (<http://www.golffitnessedge.com>) and presented his findings as part of the PGA Merchandise Show last month. "In the long run, it's about slowing down loss. It's kind of like building a retirement account for your body that you can draw from.

"This is really important after age 70, because we lose the ability to produce greater amounts of power and strength -- two things that are critical to the golf game."

So how do you maintain your physical fitness later in life? D'Amico said there are five simple exercises anyone can do at home -- without expensive equipment -- that will go a long way to helping your flexibility, balance, strength and power.

In order, they are:

1. **Seated Thoracic Posture Restoration**
2. **Breathing Mechanics Restoration**
3. **Single Knee to Chest Hip Stretch**
4. **Hip Hinge Goblet Squat**
5. **Standing Cross Body Crawl Pattern**

Don't let the names fool you into thinking these exercises are complicated, D'Amico said. On the contrary, they mimic movements you learned to do early in your life.

Here's a description of each exercise, with illustrations.

Seated Thoracic Posture Restoration



1. Sit tall in a high-back dining room chair
2. Place a small bath towel rolled length ways at the level of the bottom of your shoulder blade
3. Gently push your mid back into the towel without pain for two minutes
4. Move the towel up your shoulder blades, holding each for two minutes gently without pain. The last towel position will be at the top of the shoulder blade
5. Perform this exercise 1–2 times a day
6. Watch TV or on converse with someone across the room to promote proper posture. Do not read, use phone, tablet or computer while doing this exercise, as this will negatively influence your posture

TIPS FROM THE TIPS: [Don't be afraid to Tee It Forward](http://www.pga.com/play-golf-america/already-golf/teeing-it-forward) (<http://www.pga.com/play-golf-america/already-golf/teeing-it-forward>)

Breathing Mechanics Restoration

1. While sitting or standing straight in an upright torso posture, hands on lower ribs
2. Place hands on outside of lower ribs
3. Relax your body and take a normal breath
4. Feel your hands push away from your body as you breathe in
5. Feel your hands pull in as you breathe out
6. Five repetitions, five times per day

Single Knee to Chest Hip Stretch



1. Resting on a firm surface or bed (pillow optional) gently brace your stomach
2. Use a bed sheet to pull your thigh towards (not to) your chest. Do not move past a point that the pelvis begins to rock on the low back. You may notice this as the point your straight leg begins to lift up
3. The total limit of this exercise is 120 degrees. This point may take months to attain
4. Perform for 90 seconds to two minutes each leg, one to two times per day
5. Perform gently without any pain

Hip Hinge Goblet Squat



1. Stand tall
2. Activate (gently brace) your stomach muscles
3. Arms Across your chest with 5-pound dumbbell or two-liter soda bottles in double-bagged plastic grocery bags at your chest
4. Maintain your head, spine and pelvic posture, as if you had a board nailed from the back of your head to your tailbone
5. Push your tailbone back and down as you begin to hinge hips, knees and ankles simultaneously Maintain the bottom of the dumbbell or seltzer bottle against your body throughout the exercise
6. Depth of squat is controlled by your ability to maintain your head, spine and pelvic posture

7. When learning this exercise it is best to perform five reps, four times per day
8. After learning this exercise and as a warm up for golf perform sets sets of 10 repetitions

Standing Cross Body Crawl Pattern

1. Standing with hands at shoulder level, lift one hand and the opposite foot six inches.
2. Return to original position
3. Repeat with other hand and foot
4. If balance is an issue you may stand at countertop and if necessary keep one hand at a time on counter
5. Perform this exercise 20 repetitions, five times per day
6. Try to perform this exercise rhythmically, and maintain your balance for safety

The result of doing these exercises should improve all the things that control the physical part of your golf game, D'Amico said.

"In developing a better body and better mind, we can develop a better body-swing connection," he added.