

Exercise of the Month - Deadlifts

The deadlift is a compound exercise that is rarely used in gymnasiums today due to the popularity of machine weights. The deadlift is perhaps one of the most natural movements that we can do as we perform “similar” movement patterns every time we pick something up off the ground.

Deadlifts strengthen the entire postural chain of the body – that is, the legs, the glute, and the abdomen, along with the middle and lower back. The legs and glute provide the power and strength to accelerate the weight off the ground, while all the time the abdomen has to activate to stabilise the trunk so to maintain neutral spine angle. The muscles around the shoulder blades have to contract to hold the scapula in their neutral position – resisting the weight that is trying to pull the shoulders forward and round. Posturally, there are few exercises in the gym that come close to achieving the benefits that the deadlift provides.

Golfers should incorporate the deadlift into their strength and conditioning program for the following reasons:

- Increased leg and glute strength that may deliver increased distance to your shots.
- Increased trunk stability, which will assist in maintenance of consistent spine angle at address and throughout your swing.
- Increased shoulder blade strength and control which will assist in maintenance of upper body posture both at address and throughout your swing.
- When performed correctly, the deadlift can help decrease and prevent low back pain through increasing trunk and glute strength.

Performing the deadlift:

1. Address the bar with feet about shoulder width apart, and shoe laces below the bar.
2. Bend down and grip the bar with an overhand grip just outside your thighs. Your shins should be touching the bar and your weight distributed evenly throughout your feet. Shoulders will be held back and arms straight. Use a mirror to the side to check your alignment.
3. Before attempting to lift the bar, ensure that your spine is set at neutral and your body alignment is as per figure 1. At this point, take a big breath in.
4. Initiate the lift through your legs, once the bar reaches your knees (figure 2), your job is to drive your hips forward to meet the bar (figure 3). Exhale throughout the lift – from beginning to end. At this point your body should be upright and your posture set at neutral. You should not have arched your lower back further than your normal resting posture.
5. At all times, keep your tummy tight, bracing your trunk. Shoulders should always remain back at neutral by using the muscles in between your shoulder blades.



Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Please seek expert instruction from the Strength & Conditioning Coach in your gymnasium to ensure perfect technique. Some people consider this lift “dangerous” or “bad for you back”; these people are generally unable to teach the exercise with correct form, which may result in back pain. When performed with sound technique, the deadlift is one of the safest and most beneficial exercises in the gym. What other exercise in the gym can give you the benefits of increased length, improved posture both at address and during your swing, and decreased chance of back pain?

For more information on improving your golf through physical interventions, our double CD “Better Body...Better Golf” will give you all the answers you need. We take you through the 10 most common swing faults and teach you how to assess yourself and which exercises are right to fix your individual faults. You can read more about this sensational product at www.thegolfathlete.com

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