

It All Begins with Good Posture

All good coaches commence their teaching with basics of grip and stance. If the golfer starts with shoulders closed to the target line then compensations must be made immediately to square the clubface.

An important part of these basics is the attainment of good posture at address. What is good posture?? This varies from individual to individual. However without good posture, your ability to complete effective weight shifts and trunk rotation is impaired.

One of the most common technical faults seen across all ages is poor upper back posture. Amongst our elite touring professionals you can see examples of the two extremes of this posture characteristic. Not everyone needs to mimic Craig Spence's perfectly flat upper back posture or alternatively Robert Allenby's more rounded or kyphotic upper back posture. Generally speaking the more your upper back is flexed or curved the harder it will be to attain a complete torso or trunk rotation.

To measure how easily you can attain this posture and thus maximize the range of motion you have in the thoracic spine – complete the following simple test. We call this test the Combined Elevation test. If you can lift your wrists less than 5cm off the ground (with straight elbows) then it is unlikely that you can easily attain the correct upper back posture. More importantly, you may then impair the amount of torque or force producing torso rotation you can attain. If you can lift off around 10 to 15 cm you would be considered within ideal limits.

During takeaway, extension or backwards movement of your trunk occurs in combination with rotation. If you lose either of these movements then a number of compensations may result:

1. Lifting of your head
2. Lifting and thus separation of the arms from the trunk
3. Excessive flexing or bending of your left knee

If your coach has noticed or commented that technically this is YOUR common fault, then start by examining your basic setup and posture with these tests. Remember improved posture and range is about improved performance and technique as well as decreasing your predisposition to injury.

Once you have identified that you are limited for range then try some of the following stretches to increase your range. Then consult your PGA Professional to ensure that you harness all this new range of motion and improve that errant upper back posture.

Enjoy good pain free golfing!!

Michael Dagleish
APA Sports Physiotherapist
Director – The Golf Athlete and The Optima Group
76 Enoggera Road
Newmarket 4051
07 3356-3312
newmarket@tog.com.au