

by Arthur Utley

It's Hip To Get Golf Fit

New technologies, increased awareness helps golfers improve their game during all seasons



Dr. David A. Berv (crouching) helps a student with a range of motion exercise. "The best exercise for you is the one you'll do," Dr. Berv says.

SCOTT K. BROWN

Golf fitness.

This is a new year. Where does golf fitness fit on your list of resolutions?

At the top? Near the top? In the middle or is it “no worries for me, I’ll just take some Advil and a golf cart and accept my bad score.”

Tiger Woods and David Duval brought fitness out of the shadows and into the mainstream in the late 1990s. Gary Player, in the 1960s, was the first fitness nut.

“If you want to play a good game, you have to look at golf fitness,” says Madeline Parrish, owner of Pilates 72 who has worked with college golfers.

Golfers *know* they should be in good shape.

“Many golfers go to the gym and enjoy pilates, yoga, spin class and swimming. Many golfers run the track and stretch and lift weights,” says Adam Smith, the PGA director of instruction at Salisbury Country Club in Midlothian and the Middle Atlantic Section of the PGA of America’s teacher of the year for 2008. “Many golfers do not work out, but do believe they should. Often times, their excuse, their ‘out,’ is ‘I don’t have the time.’”

Smith has a question for those golfers. “What are you doing at 6 in the morning? If you are getting your last hour of sleep, then modify your behavior and get up an hour earlier. Hit the gym first thing in the morning then tackle your day. Your overall general health will prosper and the golf swing will benefit as well. Now, you need to go to bed one hour earlier.”

Understood, but where do you start? Exercises you might think are helpful might not be. Oodles of information about golf fitness and whom to turn exist on the Internet and in books and magazines.

“The caveat is, how do you know what’s right for you?” says Dr. David A. Berv.

Working one on one with a golf-fitness professional is the optimum way to learn what’s right for you. It isn’t free, though.

HI-TECH ADVANCES

Dr. Berv is the founder of Richmond-based Custom Golf Diagnostics and its centerpiece program, InnerSwing. His expertise has graced the pages of *Virginia Golfer* on numerous occasions. He’s a chiropractic sports physician, golf fitness instructor and

certified golf biomechanist, and he’s added golf teaching professional certification to his credentials in order to understand the technical aspects of the swing.

Dr. Berv has worked with men’s and women’s professional golfers, amateurs and recreational players. He travels regularly nationally and internationally to work with clients.

The newest generation of the InnerSwing program includes a scientifically-tested golf fitness software called Play Better, Play Longer. Featuring advanced, wireless technology, the system captures a



Swing motion analyzers have helped instructors and students learn more about how one's swing – and body – functions.

TAYLORMADE GOLF

player’s swing through video and animated three-dimensional models. There are six different views and angles of the swing. Golfers can see where they are every moment of the swing.

In referring to the process as an MRI of your golf swing, Dr. Berv says, “Everyone has a DNA footprint of their swing.”

The three-dimensional captures what’s happening in your swing and puts it in the context of the physical. Golfers can then work through exercises to reinforce the right positions and produce the most efficient swing for them.

STABILIZING INFLUENCE

Similar technology is available from Dynamic Golf Performance in Winchester. Founder and owner Mike Gerometta is a

strong player as well as a certified personal trainer, strength conditioning specialist and Titleist Performance Institute golf fitness professional.

A question he answers often has to do with whether golf fitness is age or gender based.

“It isn’t the age nor the gender that I’m concerned about when it comes to golf fitness,” he notes. “The biggest issue for any golfer is being biomechanically efficient in their movement. The majority of golfers, particularly among amateurs, lack the balanced mobility and stability which is crucial to developing efficient golf swings.”

Gerometta says there is one trait that seems to fit most any golfer.

“From my experience working with local PGA professionals to a weekend golfer, everyone has varying degrees of immobility and instability throughout their body,” he says. “It is these two primary issues that cause most swing faults. These swing faults can be addressed by addressing their physical restrictions through the means of corrective exercise and/or specialized fitness programs.”

Gerometta specializes in advanced corrective exercise training. His recommendation to anyone starting a golf fitness regimen is to go through one of the wireless technology programs, locate the faults and set up a personalized program.

As Dr. Berv says, “Sometimes you have

to undo some things [you thought were doing you good].”

HAVING A BALL

Gerometta is a proponent of the next “thing” in golf fitness: kettlebell training. A kettlebell is a Russian cast iron weight that looks like a cannonball with a handle. Kettlebells vary from 4 kilograms to 40.

“Kettlebell training and the golf swing have similar philosophies in that both require the body to work synergistically as one unit,” Gerometta says. “Kettlebell training is excellent in correcting faulty movement patterns unlike traditional body building training where usually just one or two major muscular groups are being worked.”

Performing a set of drills and exercises with a kettlebell “works every component of fitness such as mobility, stability, endurance, balance, flexibility, strength, power, agility, speed and quickness all at once,” he says. “This is one of the main reasons why it is so effective in improving anyone’s golf game. No other exercise program can match this.”

As one Web site proclaims, “Our Russian kettlebell is the Harley-Davidson of strength hardware.”

While at the World Golf Fitness Summit in Anaheim, Calif., in October, Parrish presented a paper on the pelvis. What wowed her, though, was a sprint-training piece of equipment called an X-iser. Sprint training focuses on short, high-intensity bursts instead of walking on a treadmill for an hour.

“It was the coolest thing – a whole body workout in a short period of time,” she says.

Daily workouts at the summit were at 6:30 a.m.

“I felt like someone put olive oil in all my joints,” Parrish says. “You do everything in such a short period of time that you don’t get bored.”

The X-iser (www.xiser.com) is portable. Sprint training focuses on short, high intensity bursts. It can provide a wide range of benefits in as little as 12 minutes and provides an option for the time-constrained person.

Whatever your fitness program, success requires commitment and discipline.

“The best exercise for you is the one you’ll do,” Dr. Berv says.

Author Arthur Utley is a sports reporter for the Richmond Times-Dispatch and a frequent contributor to Virginia Golfer.

Shape Up

A look at where to find some of the industry’s golf fitness experts

INNERSWING GOLF PERFORMANCE

Dr. David A. Berv
4911 Augusta Ave.
Richmond, Va. 23230
Phone: (804) 652-9708

Web site: www.innerswinggolf.com

Comment: Dr. Berv’s InnerSwing Golf Performance program incorporates the newest generation of professional level swing analysis and training systems. Included in the InnerSwing program is advanced wireless technology and a software application. This new system captures a player’s swing both through video and animated three-dimensional models. The golfer is able to see six different views and angles of their swing. Dynamic performance graphs are then generated that show the relative motions, speeds, alignments and sequencing of the torso, shoulders, hips and hands.

DYNAMIC GOLF PERFORMANCE

Mike Gerometta
Capitol Rehab Sport and Spine
230 Costello Drive
Suite 1
Winchester, Va. 22602
Phone: (540) 667-2103

Web site: www.dynamicgolfperformance.com

Comment: Gerometta, an authorized MyTPI Pro golf fitness professional, strives to enhance performance of golfers of all levels through his extensive golf fitness program and kettlebell training.

MICHELE GRAHAM

Inlet Fitness Inc.
2101 W. Great Neck Road
Virginia Beach, Va. 23451
Phone: (757) 412-0600

Web site: www.inletfitness.com

Comment: Graham emphasizes a team approach to performance enhancement and works directly with a student’s swing coach to achieve one’s goals. Her program is a mix of strength and flexibility training, functional training and golf-specific motor learning drills.



DYNAMIC GOLF PERFORMANCE

The use of a kettlebell, shown here by Mike Gerometta, has become a popular golf-related training method.

She uses video analysis and functional movement screening to determine one’s mobility and stability. Emphasis is placed on how certain movements affect one’s golf swing.

MADLINE PARRISH

Pilates 72, LLC
Richmond, Va. 23238
Phone: (804) 690-2001

Comment: Instructor, a MyTPI Pro golf fitness professional, works with golfers and the Richmond Ballet.

ADAM C. SMITH

PGA Director of Instruction
Salisbury Country Club
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Comment: In teaching golf fitness, Smith focuses on flexibility, strength training and muscle endurance. Smith has a stretching manual called, *From the Ground Up*, which encourages students to follow a prescribed 30-minute stretching routine. Smith emphasizes a holistic development of golf and life skills.

–Andrew Blair