



The Cure for Golfers Winter Withdrawal

FLEX-N-STRETCH

by Kevin Hensel



Golfers winter withdrawal typically occurs between November and March when the weather is a little too frigid to be outside on the golf course. Symptoms can include depression, sluggishness, a desire to be in warmer climates, a preoccupation with watching sporting events, and/or uncontrollable impulses to buy expensive golf equipment. Even when spring finally arrives it can take several months to find your swing, which somehow disappeared over the winter hibernation. A golf specific winter exercise regimen might be the answer. David Quinn, local pro golfer of Links Country Club in Marlton, NJ, knows the value of a winter exercise routine. Quinn was recently awarded the Philadelphia Sectional PGA 2005 Player of the Year, which includes Delaware Valley's top professional golfers.

"I started a rigorous golf specific exercise regimen last winter with a personal trainer," says Quinn. "This spring I hit the ball farther, straighter, and more consistently, not to mention losing all of my chronic neck pain. This was the first year I also won the lowest scoring average and broke the all time earnings record. I just don't have the time to do a lot of exercise when I am playing so much during the golf season, so my winter conditioning is pivotal."

The best golfers in the world know the importance of winter golf conditioning programs. Grueling tour schedules emphasize the gains of off-season conditioning. Tiger Woods may have gained 30 pounds since the age of 21, but it is all muscle and helps afford him a 300+ yards average off the tee. Tiger's intensive exercise routine, kept under tight security that would impress Fort Knox, is the main ingredi-

ent. Vijay Singh and other top notch pro golfers go one step further by having their personal trainers and/or conditioning coaches travel with them on tour. LPGA star Christie Kerr was recently profiled on NBC's Today Show touting the benefits of exercise on her golf game. Before wearing the crown of "Top American Golfer" Christie struggled, making a cut when the golf prodigy first went pro back in 1996. After starting a rigorous exercise and diet regimen, she lost 60 pounds, alleviated all of her chronic back pain, and since 2001, has finished in the top three of 22 matches with five victories.

Understandably, not everyone can afford to have a personal trainer or conditioning coach with them on the course or in the gym this winter. Many golfers do not have the time during the golf season to exercise because they are playing or practicing as much as possible. The winter is a great time to utilize free time by incorporating flexibility, balance, and strengthening exercises that address individual swing and body mechanics. The golf community seems to agree.

"One of the most obvious differences between nearly all pro golfers and you is their incredible flexibility," says Dr. Greg Rose, host of Golf Channel's Golf Fitness Academy. "Limited mobility can cause virtually any swing fault due to your body's inability to move through a full proper range of motion."

Jamie Shaffer, thirteen year PGA teaching professional at Woodcrest Country Club in Cherry Hill, NJ, will be teaming up with personal trainer, Kevin Hensel, of Fit-4-Life, Inc., for a variety of winter golf conditioning clinics and individual sessions.

"Most golfers just can't get into position for a good golf swing," says Shaffer. "A video swing analysis helps me identify a golfer's swing faults, then I send them over to Kevin to correct the muscular imbalances that are causing the faults." Now golfers of all levels can improve their game and save a