



Unlocking a Better Golf Swing Starts with Mobility

When most golfers think about improving their game, they usually focus on swing mechanics, new clubs, or spending more time on the range. But one of the biggest performance limiters often has nothing to do with technique and everything to do with mobility.

Two of the most overlooked areas in golf fitness are shoulder mobility and thoracic spine (T-spine) mobility. The thoracic spine, which is the middle portion of your back, plays a major role in rotation, posture, and power generation throughout the golf swing. When this area becomes stiff, the body must compensate elsewhere, and usually, the lower back pays the price.

Limited T-spine mobility can lead to low back pain, reduced range of motion during the backswing, poor posture at setup, and significant loss of power through impact. Instead of rotating efficiently through the upper body, golfers often overuse the lumbar spine, shoulders, or arms to create movement. This not only decreases performance, but also increases injury risk.

Several common swing faults are directly connected to poor mobility.

The “chicken wing” follow-through, where the lead arm bends excessively after impact, is often linked to limited shoulder mobility and restricted thoracic rotation. If the body cannot rotate fully through the shot, the arms take over, creating inefficient movement and loss of extension.

C-posture, recognized by excessive rounding of the upper back at address, is another common issue tied to poor thoracic extension and weak postural support. This setup position limits proper rotation and can place unnecessary strain on the neck, shoulders, and lower back.

Casting, or releasing the club too early during the downswing, can also be

influenced by restricted mobility. When the hips and thoracic spine do not rotate efficiently, golfers often rely on their hands and arms to generate speed, sacrificing compression, consistency, and distance.

The good news is that many of these issues can be improved with a few simple mobility drills performed consistently.

Exercises such as book openers, thread-the-needle stretches, wall thoracic rotations, kettlebell halos, and hip-to-T-spine rotational drills can dramatically improve movement quality. These stretches help restore rotation, improve posture, and create better sequencing throughout the swing.

Thread-the-Needle Stretches

To begin, get onto your hands and knees in a tabletop position with your wrists directly under your shoulders and knees under your hips. Lift one hand off the ground and “thread” it through the space between your opposite arm and leg. Slide your arm along the floor as far as comfortable, lowering your shoulder and ear toward the mat.

This exercise is excellent for releasing tension in the upper back and improving rotational range of motion. For a deeper stretch, you can press your stationary hand into the floor to gently increase the twist through your ribcage. Hold the position for 20 to 30 seconds, focusing on deep breaths to help the muscles relax, then switch sides. It’s a great addition to any routine, whether you’re looking to undo the stiffness of desk work or improve your fluidity for rotational sports.

Kettlebell Halos

These are premier-dynamic movements for developing “360-degree” shoulder mobility and core stability. To perform them, hold a kettlebell by the horns (the sides of the

handle) in an inverted position at chest height. Keeping your feet shoulder-width apart and your core braced, slowly circle the kettlebell around your head, dropping it behind your neck and bringing it back to the starting position in front of your chest. The goal is to keep the bell as close to your head as possible without hitting yourself, using your shoulders to drive the rotation rather than your neck or torso.

This exercise is particularly valuable for golfers because it promotes healthy scapular movement while forcing the midsection to stabilize against a shifting center of gravity. As you move the weight behind you, focus on keeping your ribs tucked and your hips square; this prevents the lower back from arching and ensures the mobility is coming from the thoracic spine and shoulders. Performing 8 to 10 controlled rotations in each direction is an excellent way to prep the upper body for high-velocity swings or heavy lifting.

Book Openers

Lie on your side with one knee bent at 90 degrees. Extend both arms straight out in front of you on the floor, hands touching. Keeping your bent knee pinned to the ground—often assisted by placing a foam roller or pillow underneath it—slowly lift your top arm and reach it up and over toward the floor on the opposite side.

As you move, follow your hand with your eyes to incorporate neck mobility, and focus on exhaling as you reach the peak of the stretch. The goal is to rotate through your ribcage rather than simply forcing your arm back, which helps counteract the “hunched” posture often developed from prolonged sitting or repetitive rotational movements. Hold the open position for a few seconds to feel the

expansion across your pectoral muscles before slowly returning your hand to the starting position. Repeating this for 5 to 10 reps on each side can significantly relieve tension and improve overall spinal health.

Remember, mobility is not just about flexibility; it is about creating efficient movement patterns that support both performance and longevity in the game. Before chasing swing fixes, golfers should first ask: does my body have the mobility to move the way my swing requires?

Often, the fastest way to a better golf swing may not be just another lesson, but also better overall body movement.

Krissy Matney is a certified personal trainer and nutrition coach with over 10 years of experience, specializing in golf fitness and performance. As a TPI Level 1 certified coach and Pain-Free Performance Specialist, she works one-on-one and in small groups to improve mobility, strength, and swing efficiency. Through her business, *Healthandfitness@Home*, she trains clients throughout the North Shore area, delivering personalized, results-driven coaching. Her approach is rooted in proper form and purposeful movement to help golfers play stronger, move better, and stay injury-free.

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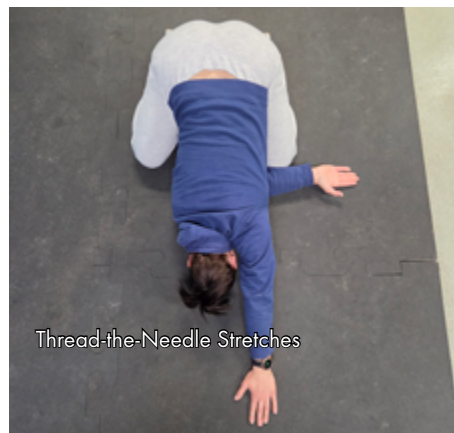
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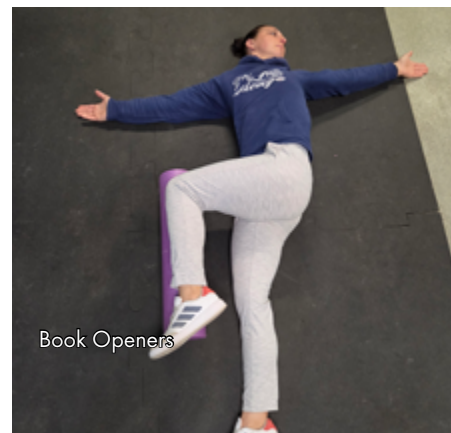
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