



# What is a golf warm-up?

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**PROBABLY THE MOST** common question I am asked by golfers around the world is: "Can you give me a quick golf warm-up before I play or practice?"

This used to infuriate me as I felt that golfers were not looking at a long term approach to physically preparing for golf. The compromise was the "Six Step Plan for your Golf Day" which I have produced in article form and is available on the Titleist Performance website.

I have however, realised that a good, efficient & functional warm up is better than a bad warm up or no warm up at all. I have also realised that as my life has become

busier with work commitments, travel and family that a short burst of efficient exercise is not only going to help me prepare for golf in its simplest form but will allow me to get into some form of "golf zone" on the first tee as I leave my worries and stress in the golf club car park.

I have prepared 3 articles to outline the following:

1. The effects & benefits of sequencing your 7 minute golf warm up
2. The 7 deadly sins in a golf warm up
3. The 7 minute golf warm up

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## The effects & benefits of sequencing your 7 minute golf warm-up

Several years ago I had a discussion with Iain Roberts, the Head Professional at Hong Kong Golf Club.

He had suffered from a severe back condition that not only limited his golf practice but also his ability to participate in a full and active life. He told me about the way he sequenced his exercises and that this process, in conjunction with specialist rehabilitation, had allowed him to return to his love of golf and golf practice. Iain challenged me to study the effect of sequencing.

I began to observe more closely the best players in the world and realised that the great majority of these players were already

sequencing their golf practice sessions. For example, most players would always start with dry drills (recruitment exercises that mimicked how they wanted to swing without hitting balls).

They would then start on their short game e.g. chipping, pitching or even skills tests and would finish off with long irons and woods. In other words they would get their flexibility and mobility and feel primed followed by more dynamic and powerful motor movements. In looking at other fields such as opera singers, ballet dancers and orchestra members it was clear they were similar in their correct sequencing to their warm-up for their specific tasks.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CORRECTLY SEQUENCING YOUR GOLF WARM-UP?

1. You are maximising your function in the least amount of time – good time management;
2. You are reducing the risk of injury as a result of poor or no warm-up;
3. It compliments a good golf practice warm-up and regime;
4. It will help you mentally feel that you have prepared more specifically for your participation in golf;
5. Through continued application and repetition you will become more aware of how your body reacts to the warm-up which will in turn promote self help and awareness.

## STEPS OF THE GOLF WARM-UP SEQUENCE

### Good Breathing and tempo control

This is essential to get the golfer into a less anxious state and to encourage good timing throughout the exercise.

Rhythmic walking around the tee whilst using breathing control can be a good adjunct to increasing heart rate.

### Flexibility and Mobility Exercise

These exercises are carried out initially as they will determine the range of movement of specific muscle groups and the underlying joints. They will increase the blood flow to regions of the body that will be under load during the golf swing.

### Balance and Feel Exercises

These exercises build up body awareness and correct weight transference in the golfer. The proprioceptive effect will reinforce good golf feels especially in short game.

### Static Posture and Extension Exercise

Once there is good proprioception and body awareness, postural/isometric exercises are prescribed to improve posture at golf address and prevent excessive movements in the golf swing.

### Core Stability Exercises

These exercises require deep core muscles of the body to be recruited and also recruitment of the major golf muscle groups in a synchronised sensory motor movement that will promote a good kinetic chain effect which is the essence of an efficient and repeatable golf swing.

### Dynamic Posture and Rotation Exercises

These exercises require a higher level of skill, coordination, balance and power. Many amateur golfers are incapable of performing these exercises that not only lead to compensatory movements in the task of the exercise but also in the golf swing itself.

## CONCLUSION

It is clear from a subjective and clinical point of view that having a correctly sequenced golf warm-up has not only a historical relevance as seen by the common practices of warm-up by Tour Players but also has logical substance from a physiological point of view.

I will emphasise this point in the next couple of issues of *HK Golfer*, starting in next month's UBS Hong Kong Open issue with 'The 7 deadly sins of warm-up'.

A final thought for those of you who have driven a manual car. When you take the wheel of a manual car, you let the car warm-up and gradually go through first, second, third and fourth gear to get maximum speed, distance and efficiency. You also do this damage to the engine. This analogy is not a bad one to consider when you are sequencing your own body in your golf warm-up. You can swap cars but you cannot swap your body!