

Dr. Paul Callaway's Golf Health and Fitness Tips

“Build Strong Shoulders for a Strong Swing”

On today's longer golf courses, golfers who can hit the ball farther most definitely have an edge over shorter hitters. Technology has helped many golfers add more distance to their game but only when they have already developed a consistent swing for the new equipment to compliment.

Therefore, if a golfer really wants to achieve more distance in their game and stay injury-free, then adding strength in their golf-specific muscles is the way to go.

As a golfer, it is important to know what exercises would be most helpful to accomplish the goal of gaining some needed length. Length with improved strength will not necessarily be accomplished unless the proper, golf-specific exercises are performed properly and consistently.

Consequently, it is always recommended that every golfer first receive a complete physical performance evaluation by a health professional trained specifically to evaluate golfers before they attempt any strengthening and conditioning program for golf.

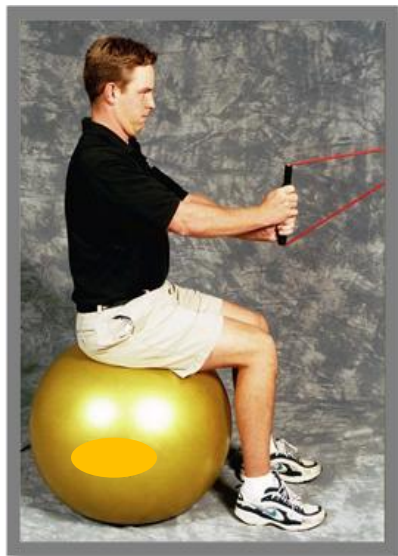
One key area of strength that will help add distance to most golfers' games is in the shoulders. Shoulder strengthening provides a solid foundation for the arms and club to swing around the body with more speed and control.

The Seated Row

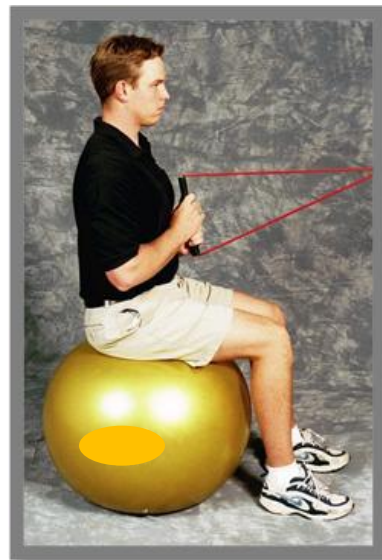
The first exercise is aimed at strengthening the shoulder blades.

To perform the “Seated Row”:

- Attach an elastic band and/or resistance tubing securely in a doorway.
- Position a chair/fitness ball away from the doorway so you feel a proper amount of resistance in the band/tubing.
- Keep a straight back and tucked lower abdomen and begin the exercise by squeezing your shoulder blades down and together (see Picture 1A).
- Maintain the shoulder blade squeeze while you then slowly pull your hands to your chest in a rowing motion (see Picture 1B).
- Hold for two seconds or one complete breath and then slowly release your arms without ever letting go of your shoulder blade squeeze.
- Repeat this exercise between **1-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions** and do the exercise every other day.



Picture 1A



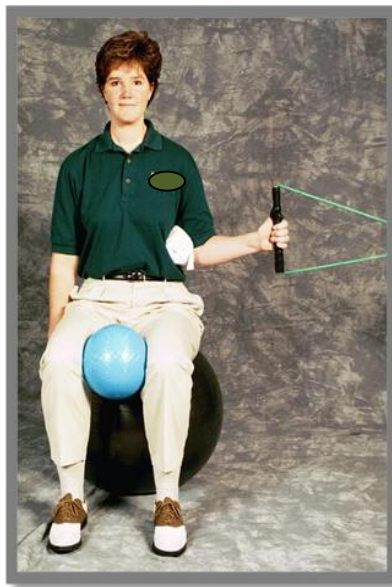
Picture 1B

Internal Shoulder Rotation

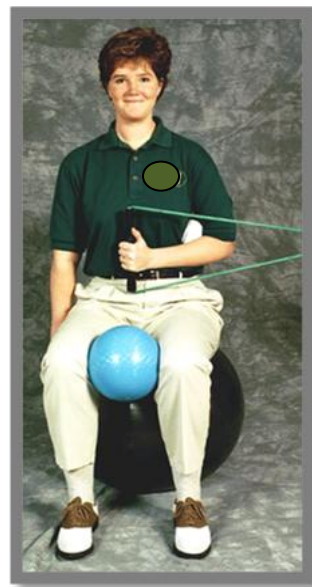
The next exercise is geared for strengthening the internal portion of the rotator cuff muscles in the shoulder. These muscles provide stability to the shoulder joint and allow for its rotational motion throughout the golf swing.

To perform the “Internal Shoulder Rotation”:

- Remain sitting on a chair/fitness ball as with the “Seated Row” exercise but turn your body to a 45° angle to the doorway.
- Grip the band/tubing with your left hand with your elbow bent at a 90° angle (see Picture 2A).
- Slowly pull your fist to your stomach by rotating your left shoulder inward but be sure to keep your torso stable and spine straight so only your arm is rotating (see Picture 2B).
- Hold the end position for 1 breath and then slowly release your back to the starting position.
- Repeat this exercise for **1-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions** and do the exercise every other day.
- Perform this exercise with both shoulders.



Picture 2A



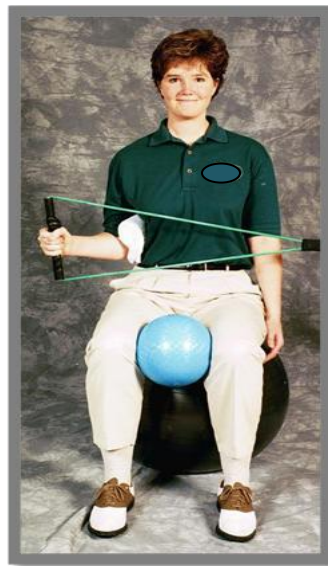
Picture 2B

External Shoulder Rotation

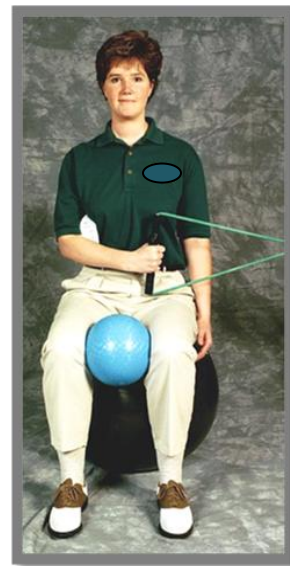
The purpose of the next sample shoulder exercise is to strengthen the outer portion of the rotator cuff muscles that allow the shoulder joints to rotate externally as well as to decelerate during the release and follow-through phases of the golf swing.

To perform the “External Shoulder Rotation”:

- Once again sit with your body angled at approximately 45° to the attachment of the band/tubing in the door.
- With your elbow bent to 90°, this time rotate your right shoulder joint outward by pulling your right hand away from your stomach as far as possible in a slow and controlled fashion (see Picture 3A).
- Hold this end position for 1-2 breaths and then slowly release your hand back to the starting position (see Picture 3B).
- Repeat this exercise for **1-3 sets of 8-12 repetitions** every other day.
- Perform the exercise with both shoulders.



Picture 3A



Picture 3B

Paul Callaway, PT, PhD is the Director of Golf Fitness at the Cantigny Golf Academy in Wheaton, IL. He was the first Director of Physical Therapy on the PGA Tour and has specialized in golf-specific fitness training, performance enhancement and injury-prevention for the past 25 years. If you have questions for him about this article or any other topic related to golf fitness and performance, he can be reached via email at paul@callawaygolffitness.com, by calling 630-567-7572 or by visiting www.callawaygolffitness.com.