

## Dr. Paul Callaway's Golf Health and Fitness Tips

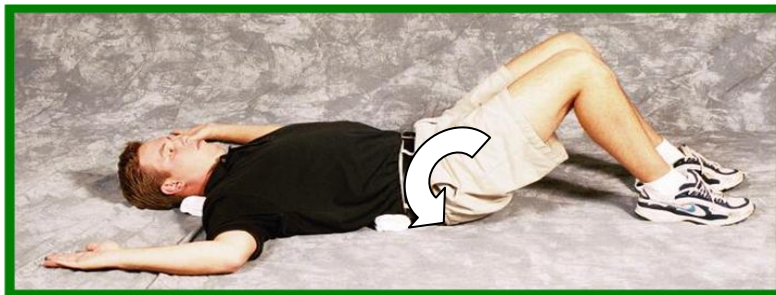
### **“Strong Stomach Strong Swing”**

If you were to think about one body area to strengthen in order to improve your golfing distance, accuracy and consistency it would definitely be your stomach muscles. The stomach or abdominal muscles are the foundation for supporting proper golf posture throughout the swing and are the core muscles responsible for allowing your legs and arms to generate power. Strong arms and legs without a solid foundational support from strong abdominal muscles will not provide you with the added distance and accuracy you are looking for. As a golfer, weak stomach muscles will also promote injury to the lower back.

There are four portions of your abdominal muscles that need to be strengthened: upper, lower, transverse and oblique. The following three exercises are beginning level suggestions for you to try so you can develop the core strength in your body necessary to gain added distance, accuracy and consistency in your golf shots while also protecting your lower back from injury when you practice and play.

#### **Lower Abdominal Pelvic Tilts**

Begin by lying on your back with your hips and knees comfortably bent. Press your lower back firmly onto the floor by squeezing your lower abdominal muscles. Be certain to keep your neck long and flat, and that your shoulder blades remain flat to the floor (see picture #1). Hold this position for 2-3 breaths and then relax. Repeat this exercise up to 30-50 repetitions.

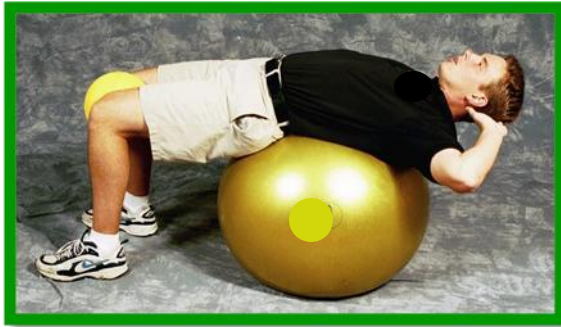


Picture #1

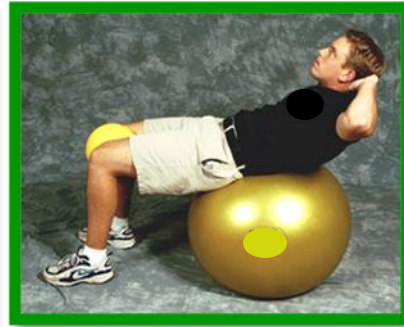
#### **Upper Abdominal Crunches**

To strengthen your upper abdominal muscles, lay back on a Swiss ball and interlock your fingers behind your neck (see picture #2). Then, perform a pelvic tilt, squeeze your shoulder

blades together lightly and curl your upper body off the ball using your upper abdominal muscles. Be sure to exhale as you lift, keep your chin off your chest and your elbows out of your peripheral vision (see picture #3). Hold this position for 2-3 breaths and then slowly lower your upper body to the starting position. Repeat the exercise for 1-3 sets of 10 repetitions.



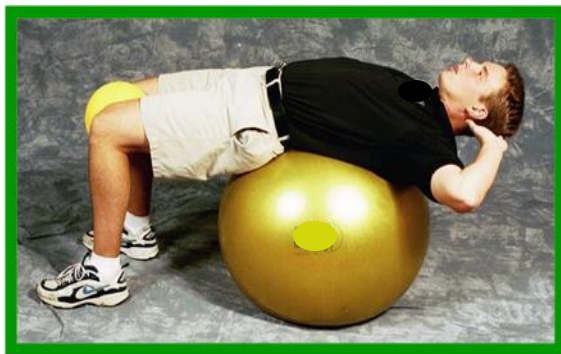
Picture #2



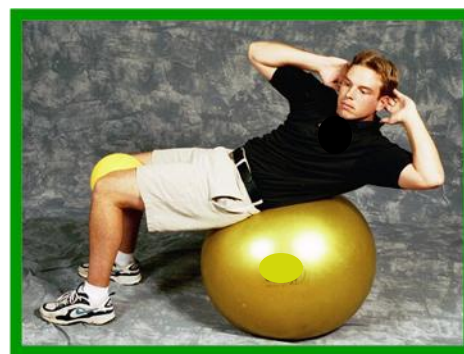
Picture #3

### **Abdominal Rotation Crunches**

The final stomach strengthening exercise will focus on the oblique abdominal muscles. The oblique muscles help to promote a strong, stable rotational movement in your golf swing. To begin, start in the same position as for the previous “Upper Abdominal Crunch” starting position (see picture #4). As before, first perform a pelvic tilt, squeeze your shoulder blades together lightly and slowly curl your upper body off the ball. However, in this exercise, as you curl your upper body off the ball, twist your right shoulder toward your left knee (see picture #5). Be sure to exhale as you lift, and keep your chin off your chest and your elbows out off your peripheral vision. Hold this position at the top of the rotation crunch until you have completely exhaled (2-3 seconds) and then slowly lower your upper body back onto the ball. Repeat the exercise 1-3 sets of 10 repetitions for each rotational direction (left shoulder lifted and twisted toward right knee).



Picture #4



Picture #5

All three of these abdominal strengthening exercises, when done properly and consistently, will rapidly begin to improve the strength of your core muscles and provide you with a solid foundation to swing around. This solid foundation will then, with professional instruction and practice, improve your full swing power potential, help to increase your overall distance, and protect your lower back from needless injury.

*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](mailto:paul@callawaygolffitness.com), by calling 630-567-7572 or by visiting [www.callawaygolffitness.com](http://www.callawaygolffitness.com).*