



Janine Young

GET FIT

Do You REALLY Want to Improve Your Game?

YOU NEED TO START NOW!

It is official . . . we are in the “Off Season” once again in Kansas City. The boys are out there battling the final KCGA Major-The KC Masters-at Oakwood, the High School Girls are showing their fortitude in some tough conditions (remember that one week this summer the rough got a little thinner?) and you can get a tee time pretty much anywhere, anytime. Unfortunately the weather is not cooperating, for those of us who love to get out this time of year and play, while everybody else is inside watching the Chiefs. I am afraid this year, if the weather had been better, it might have been a bit more crowded than usually on the links...kinda starting to feel like a Cubs fan...we’ll get ‘em next year.

Anyway I regress, how did everybody’s golf season go? Time to take a look back and reflect.

Did your game improve? Did your swing improve? Did you fight any injuries? Did you hit the ball farther? Were you more accurate? Did you have more **fun**?

Another great question John Richman brought up last month . . . How can you tell? Have you tracked your progress? It is as important to the success of your golf game as it is to the success of your training program to assess where you are (Establish a baseline), decided where you want to go (set lofty goals), and have a plan to get there (performance training plan). And to do this with the guidance of both your golf teaching Professional **and** a qualified golf fitness Professional will definitely increase your odds for reaching your goals.

In this September’s 50th Anniversary Issue of *Golf Magazine*, there was a phenomenal article titled, “The New Way to Improve,” by David DeNunzio. I recommend it to **everyone**, trying to improve in any skill, especially golf. In a nutshell, the author looks at the scientific research that has been exploring “how we learn” for years. He itemizes eight ways to rethink your Golf practice and performance training.

Here are the highlights:

TAKE A LESSON

One of the most quoted golf statistics is that despite the many advantages and improvements in technology, the Average Amateur Handicap has not gone down in the past 50 years. Well, there is a group of people for whom this is just not the case...dare to take a guess? It is the 12% of golfers who have taken a lesson! 318 amateur golfers, who studied with one of Golf Magazine’s Top 100 teaching

pros, were followed from September 2007 to September 2008. During this one-year period these players lowered their handicaps by an average of 35%, this is compared to a .01% decrease in the average handicap in the USGA database. Ask your Pro to teach you to practice and how to transfer what you are practicing on the range, to your game.

Just because the windchill is 30 today and it is raining sideways, there are options for indoor golf instruction . . . We have a beautiful new state-of-the-art, indoor Golf Diagnostic Studio, with a V1 Professional High Speed 2D Video System, the only TPI 3D Swing Analysis System and located at the best kept secret in Kansas City . . . Will Shield’s 68 Inside Inside Sports Fitness Center. We welcome PGA teaching instructors and their students to visit and take advantage of our facilities. (Contact Janine@elitegolfnfitness.com or call 913-226-7092 for more information).

HAVE THE RIGHT KIND OF SWING THOUGHTS

I can attest from my own experience, a little knowledge can be deadly to your SWING. As I learned more and more about the biomechanics of the golf swing, I was challenged when going out to play a round of golf, not to become too mechanical in **everything** I was doing on the golf course. One of my favorite quotes is, “you don’t play **golf swing**...you play **golf**” with the swing you have that day, one hole at a time. Our swing thoughts or ‘cues’ need to be external, focusing on the club, not mechanical or internal, focusing on the body. This is why a golf fitness trainer and golf professional who understand your golf swing, your body and what you are trying to accomplish with your swing are truly invaluable in your quest for improvement.

You should be able to count on your body to have the physical ability to swing the golf club and hit the ball square, without coaxing it to . . . this requires proper training and practice.

TRAIN AND PRACTICE YOUR “FAULT FREE” GOLF SWING

I encourage clients to feel how each exercise we work on targets the muscles important to their golf swing, while still training their athletic ability to swing. Movement Pattern Re-education or Neural Repatterning is essential to eliminating swing faults or movement that may lead to not only bad shots, but injury. You can be in the best physical shape on the planet, but if you do not do anything to correct inefficient and faulty movement patterns that is just what you will



get....to quote John Richman again, “practice does not make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect”.

Have you heard of the “10 Year Rule”? Bobby Fisher? 23.6? Well, the latter is “the number of years the last 11 major winners had played the game of golf before their victory.” (*Golf Magazine*, Sept 2009). Numerous studies have supported the theory of Carnegie-Mellon researchers, Drs. William Chase and Herbert Simon that it takes 10 years to achieve an elite level in any sport. Others estimate that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to become an expert in anything...further demonstrating that swing and fitness changes do not happen overnight.

There is a neurological response that occurs when we perform a movement repetitively. The brain sends a signal to the muscles responsible for that movement, creating a “motor engram” (what used to be termed “muscle memory”). Each time that movement is repeated the “circuit” that this signal travels (called myelin) becomes thicker, allowing for faster and easier transmission of the signal to the muscles responsible for that movement...unfortunately, the myelin does not know the difference between a poor movement pattern or the one that looks like Tiger Woods swing.

The ability to see your own swing on video tape is and invaluable tool when working to repattern your swing, just make sure that you have consulted with a trained professional to determine whether or not the swing changes you are working on, may be accomplished relative to your physical ability. You may want to swing like Tiger or even Tom Watson, but your body might not let you.

Start by finding out what are your physical limitations and swing faults. “Through the evaluation of thousands of golfers, amateur and professional, young and old, the **Titleist Performance Institute (TPI)** has uncovered that no two golfers have exactly the same swing, and thus should not be treated in the same fashion concerning their fitness programs.” Once you have established this baseline for your off-season program, determining what, if any, swing changes you would like to make is a priority. This is one of the most important aspects of the TPI training program, making sure that your Teaching Professional and Golf Fitness Professional are on the same page and speaking the same language. Cohesiveness of your team, will speed up your success.

Our approach includes both a Teaching Pro, one who understands that your body will not allow you to turn, without losing your spine angle, and how that may put your body at risk for injury, and will teach you drills to reinforce and repattern your swing; working in tandem with a Fitness Pro, who can show you exercises you can do to help you to maintain those proper spinal positions in your golf swing. Types of these exercises include mobility, balance, stability, and strength...this is why we need to know what **your** strengths, weaknesses and swing faults are. You might need mobility and flexibility work while your golf buddy needs to work on strength. Once you have the physical tools necessary, that does not mean you will automatically start hitting the ball without going back to that same old swing—reverse spine angle/over the top, hook or slice, **yuck!** Repatterning a swing takes a long time, and should be done with the use of mirrors, video analysis and supervision. Unlearning a movement pattern and relearning a new one, takes up to 10,000 repetitions, if these patterns are not worked on with precision your chance of improvement is severely reduced. Once we know what we need to work on planning an off-season training program is a snap.

So take a lesson. Practice, practice, practice . . . the right way! And think happy thoughts. Spring will be here soon!

During this off-season, establish your baseline, set those lofty goals, and put your plan to action.

As **Titleist Performance Institute Certified Golf Fitness Instructors**, the **Elite Golf and Fitness Team** is trained to implement the protocols that the PGA Touring Professionals use to identify their strengths and weaknesses to design and create their individual golf performance training programs. All of the Elite Golf and Fitness programs start with the exclusive TPI Physical Assessment Process and High Speed 2D video swing analysis. We offer individual, small group and group golf performance training for Golfers aged 4 to 104. Looking for a great Holiday Gift...give the gift of golf fitness! Contact us at 913-226-7092 or contactus@elitegolfnfitness.com