

Yoga – An Excellent Way to Improve Your Golf Game in the Off-Season

With the golf season gradually coming to a close, it's time to start pondering the best ways to improve your game this off-season. We've all heard about the benefits of doing yoga but how will that translate specifically into better performance on the course come next spring? By making a commitment to attend class even once per week throughout the colder months, the average person will feel a significant difference in the following areas:

- 1) **Flexibility & Mobility** – No surprise here! Most people have limitations in their golf swing that can be traced back to a lack of flexibility or mobility (often in the spine, hips, or shoulders) which yoga can help minimize by increasing the range of motion in these joints and their surrounding muscles.
- 2) **Breathing & Relaxation** – Most people don't often think about breathing but in yoga, participants will practice slowing down or deepening their breath. The rate at which you breathe is directly linked to your heart rate so by focusing on your breathing, you can effectively maintain a calmer state. This is a great skill to practice to help stay relaxed throughout your round of golf.
- 3) **Balance** – Some of the postures in yoga will help to improve your balance which is integral to a consistent and solid ball contact.
- 4) **Focus** – Many yoga instructors will cue participants to focus on certain aspects of their movements or breathing and if the mind wanders, they will be gently encouraged to re-focus. For golfers, this mimics what is required of the mind in terms of allowing it to wander between shots but to re-focus on the game prior to executing each shot.
- 5) **Strength** – Certain postures in yoga help build strength by allowing you to support your body weight in different positions. Strength helps golfers hit the ball with more distance.
- 6) **Posture & Alignment** – Most yoga teachers will remind class participants to be mindful of their posture and to make sure their bodies are aligned properly when executing poses. Good posture and alignment are necessary for also executing a technically sound and consistent golf swing.
- 7) **Body Awareness** – Doing yoga will help develop a better appreciation of how your body works and moves. This kinesthetic sense is helpful when learning the proper mechanics of the golf swing and in detecting and correcting swing errors when you are playing or practicing.

There are many different styles of yoga ranging from high intensity (Hot yoga and Kundalini) to low intensity (Yin Yoga and Restorative Yoga). Most studios offer a variety so you can try out a few different classes and find what works for you. Namaste.

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