



How to Improve Your Members' Game and Your Club's Bottom Line

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I've been very fortunate in my professional career to have spent the past nine years developing fitness programs for and training the world's finest golfers. In addition to my responsibilities as the Strength & Conditioning Coordinator on the DePuy Mitek mobile fitness unit that travels week to week with the tour, I've traveled the globe designing first-class facilities for golf and country clubs, colleges/universities and high-end training centers.

These experiences have taught me two absolutes. First, golf is a sport. And fitness is required to play good golf – each player has only one consistent tool that he or she uses, and that is the body. Second, country clubs should offer real solutions to ensure the strength of their bottom line, as well as the health and enjoyment of their members.

Awareness of fitness in golf has significantly increased the past few years with the attention paid to the performance physiques of many top players. What most people don't know is that roughly 85 percent of Tour pros are dedicated to a daily workout regimen. They know staying fit gives them the best chance to win tournaments and earn money!

There are some consistent elements of the regimens I design for Tour players. Specifically, exercises to develop the core and lower body, which are key to a proper golf swing. No two fitness programs are the same, however, because each individual has unique goals. That's one reason the DePuy Mitek mobile fitness unit is entirely outfitted with CYBEX.

While CYBEX has long been a strength and cardiovascular performance training leader, the applicability of its fitness solutions in golf is unquestioned. The company's Arc Trainer, Bravo Functional Trainer, treadmills, exercise bikes, adjustable benches and other equipment provide a total fitness solution that is flexible enough to serve the needs of all Tour players. Perhaps most importantly, CYBEX equipment is biomechanically correct, enabling players to exercise at higher levels of intensity without fear of injury or overuse.

Higher levels of performance and injury prevention are essential in helping golfers play better, play more often and remain active over time. As important as this is for individuals, it's vital for country clubs that generate a sizable portion of their revenues from guest fees, F&B, pro shop merchandise, etc. When a member isn't healthy enough to play – or isn't playing well enough to enjoy frequent rounds – those dollars often go out the window.

For this reason and others, approximately 40 percent of clubs that host PGA Tour events already have fitness centers on site. The number increases every year as additional club board members and managers recognize the value of fitness training, both in terms of member satisfaction and revenue generation.

Also, many clubs are promoting fitness facilities as an added-value benefit to attract and retain members. There's more than anecdotal evidence that country club golfers want fitness solutions. Just look at how many of them belong to gyms, then think about the cost savings you can provide versus membership at an area fitness club that costs up to \$200 a month!

Space is obviously a consideration when exploring a fitness facility for your members, but so too should be consulting an expert. Far too many country clubs have equipment selected by an employee without proper training and knowledge. As a result, the facility cannot address the five most common "want to" categories of golf fitness:

- * Play pain free
- * Increase distance on shots
- * Improve balance when swinging the club
- * Become more bi-lateral (balanced between left and right sides of body)
- * Have more energy throughout the round

The key to all of these is finding a happy medium between flexibility and stability, which should be the number one goal of any golf fitness program.

Author's Biography

One of the most respected figures in sports fitness, Scott Riehl has served as the Strength & Conditioning Coordinator on the tour and with the golf pros from around the world since 2001. In that position, he has designed and implemented personalized programs for the best players in golf, contributing directly to the game's increased focus on total body stability, flexibility and cardiovascular endurance.

Riehl has also developed programs and facilities to promote conditioning among amateur golfers. In particular, his Riehl Golf Fitness operation has charted an exciting new course for clubs and institutions wishing to exceed their memberships' expectations.

In addition to his work on Tour, Riehl has spent more than a decade managing some of the country's premier training facilities. His love of fitness, impeccable training expertise and dedication to cutting-edge trends are well known, leading him to design world-class facilities for country clubs, universities and high-end training centers throughout the United States and Europe.