Reseach studies validate the importance of postural balance to effective biomechanical results. In a study on the effects of orthotic intervention on balance and proprioception among experienced golfers, data suggested a relationship between exercise and changes in standing balance and proprioception. Custom-made flexible orthotics positively influenced balance and proprioceptive symmetry and possibly reduced the relative effects of fatigue associated with playing nine holes of simulated golf.

A second study on the effects of orthotic intervention on club head velocity (CHV), results showed an approximate 3-5 mph increase in CHV, or a relative increase in CHV by up to 7% after experienced golfers wore custom-made flexible orthotics daily for 6 weeks. The effects of fatigue associated with playing golf, (relative to CHV) were eliminated, therefore improving the likelihood for more consistent golf performance.

In addition to the research findings, over my years of practice the three steps discussed below have helped all of my patients who’ve used them. The key to the last sentence is “used them.” Without application, the best idea will never come to fruition. If you’re a golfer, I recommend that you try these techniques yourself. If you are not a golfer, try them out on one of your patients. If you do them exactly as I recommend, you’ll generate some excitement...and new patients.

**What To Do**

**Step #1: Stabilize the foundation.** Stabilize and balance the foundation with custom-made flexible orthotics. This will not only help structurally but functionally as well. If there is a structural imbalance, the pulley system of the muscles will be adversely affected. The muscles will not be able to work as efficiently.

There is a direct correlation between the medial arch and the iliopsoas muscle, the lateral arch and the hip abductor muscles and the transverse arch with the quadriceps/hamstring balance. All of the muscles inserting into the pelvic bowl should be working to their optimal ability and be approximately equal in strength and function. You will find that when there is asymmetry in the pedal foundation, there is muscular imbalance as well. Custom-made flexible orthotics were created to not only stabilize the bones of the foot but to also enhance muscle function throughout the lower legs and spine.

Try these simple manual muscle tests (Figs. 1 A-D):

**Procedure:**
1. perform the manual muscle tests (MMTs) before inserting the orthotics
2. insert the orthotics into patient’s shoes, have patient stand and walk around the table
3. re-test the above MMTs — the muscles will appear stronger as they are now working more efficiently.

By stabilizing the pedal foundation you will be creating better structural alignment and enhancing better muscular function. The pelvis, though moving throughout the swing, must be stable and balanced.

**Step #2: Strengthen the lumbar extensor muscles.** The most important muscle group for low back stabilization is the extensor group. Studies today clearly demonstrate that if you only strengthened one muscle group in the low back region it should be the extensors.

Many golfers, like just about every one else, have lumbar extensor muscles that are not as strong as they should be. Adding to this, the nature of their golf stance further stresses these muscles. The constant bent-over position creates a postural distortion, further weakening these muscles.

According to Weishaupt et al., when golfers who did not experience back pain were examined relative to isometric strength of trunk muscles, they showed highly significant stronger lumbar extensors, but also “muscular dysbalance in lateral flexors and rotators of the spine.” This finding supports the recommendation of specific physical training for well-balanced strengthening of muscle groups involved...
in the maintenance of spinal stability, including the lumbar extensor muscles and the muscles of the mid-back region.

For development of the lumbar extensors, this simple exercise will definitely strengthen these muscles (Fig. 2). The protocol to start off with is: 3 sets of 6 reps performed slowly to benefit both the concentric and eccentric muscle contractions. The number of reps can be increased as the golfer gets stronger. The number of sets remains the same and can be alternated with this next key exercise.

**Step #3: Strengthen the mid-back region.** Just as in the case of the lumbar extensor muscles, the mid back region — especially the mid-trapezius, rhomboids, teres minor and infraspinatus muscles — are notoriously weak. This is true for the general population and particularly for golfers (again, look at the stance posture).

This simple exercise works wonders for stabilizing the mid and upper torso (Fig. 3). The protocol for this is slightly different: 3 sets to fatigue at a fast but controlled pace. Again these would be alternated with the extensor exercises.

These exercises can be performed daily and can be done in five minutes or less.

The cardinal rule is “No Pain For Maximum Gain.” This is not an intense body-building program; it is designed to facilitate the nervous system to enhance muscular co-ordination to stabilize the golf swing.

As simple as this approach appears, it gets great results quickly. Most golfers will notice the difference immediately — all will notice it within two weeks. What will they notice? A smoother, more controlled swing that produces greater distance with each club they use.

**About the Author**

An enthusiastic speaker, Dr. William Austin provides an energetic approach to learning. He draws from over 37 years of healthcare experience, which includes athletic training, emergency medicine, English bonesetting, and chiropractic. Dr. Austin has developed two successful practices. His patients range from newborns to centenarians, couch potatoes to professional athletes. Dr. Austin is a 1986 graduate of Logan College of Chiropractic, and is currently Director of Professional Education at Foot Levelers, Inc. of Roanoke, VA.

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