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By **CHRIS WELCH**
ZenoLink
Endicott, N.Y.



Some teachers believe that the best way for their students to improve is to practice traditional drills with a ball, a club and some training aids. Others feel strongly that increasing strength and flexibility through a physical training regimen is the way to go. While both of those methods have their merits, I've found that the best way to improve performance is to combine the two philosophies by training the body in ways that duplicate golf-specific patterns and movements.

Improving your golf-specific coordination will teach your body to move in the patterns necessary for a sound motion (i.e., the proper sequence), thereby making your swing more efficient and effective. This can be done through a **Progressive Skills Training program**, the basics of which are:

1. Create a solid base with your lower body. To do this you have to learn to "grip" the ground firmly and rotate your body without letting go of this connection.

2. Learn how to engage your core muscles and stabilize your spine while firmly connecting to the ground and rotating your body.

3. Learn to swing your driver around a stable core and a connected lower body. Your arms must remain relaxed while your lower body and core remain stable. This allows the

club to be accelerated with great speed and relatively little effort.

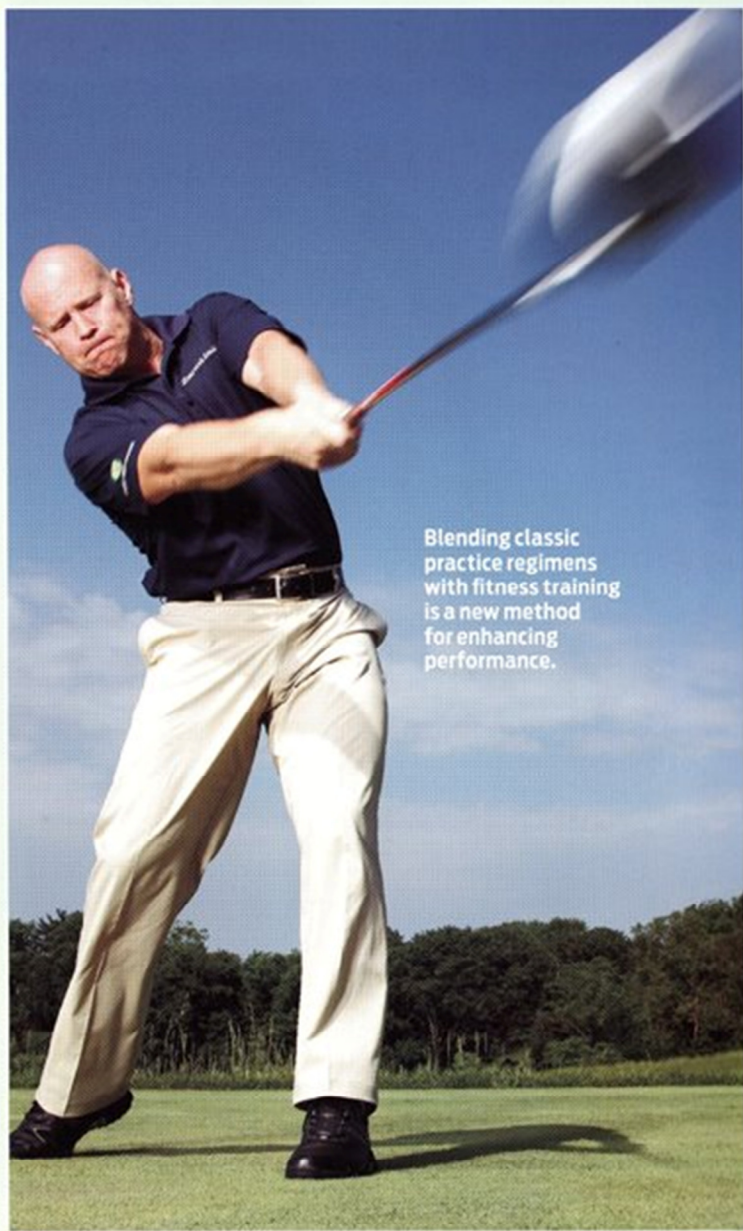
Progressive Skills Training doesn't replace fitness training or swing instruction, but instead ties the two together. The most effective way to approach this aspect of training is in phases, completed over the course of 20 weeks.

Phase 1 focuses on skill development and re-training certain aspects of your swing-movement pattern based on your bio-

mechanical strengths and weaknesses [see *exercises, next page*]. This phase generally lasts 8 weeks.

Phase 2 focuses on speed development through movement pattern [see *exercises, page 181*]. This phase, again, lasts 8 weeks.

Phase 3 is geared more toward in-season training. Emphasis is placed on maintaining off-season gains while targeting areas for improvement utilizing a combination of exercises from the previous phases.



Blending classic practice regimens with fitness training is a new method for enhancing performance.

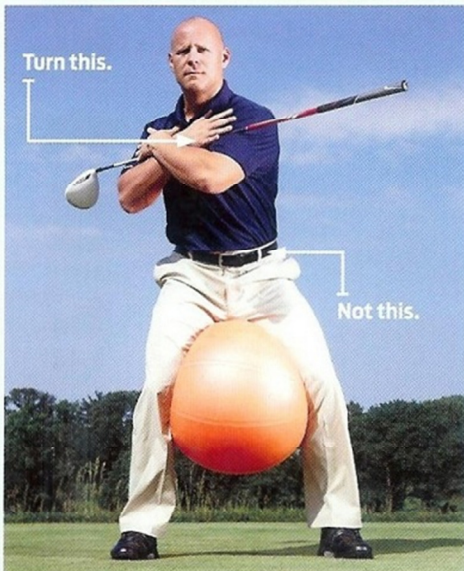


PHASE 1 EXERCISES

Core Separation with Swiss Ball

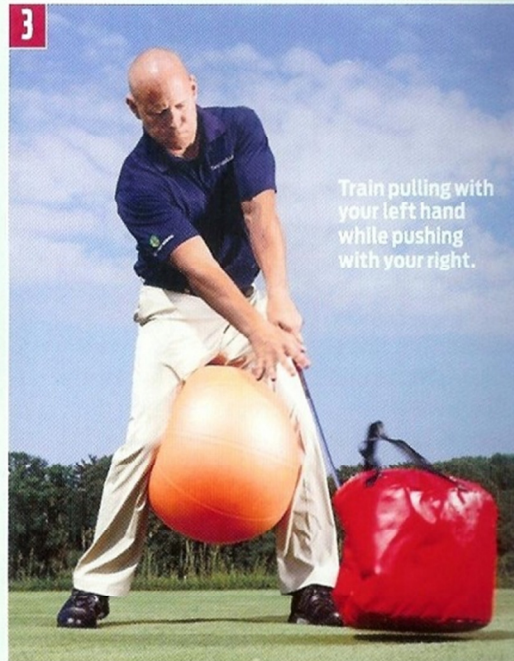
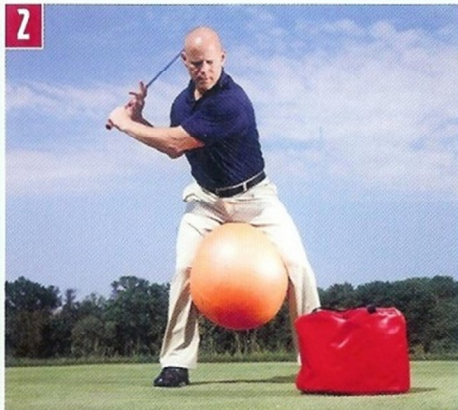
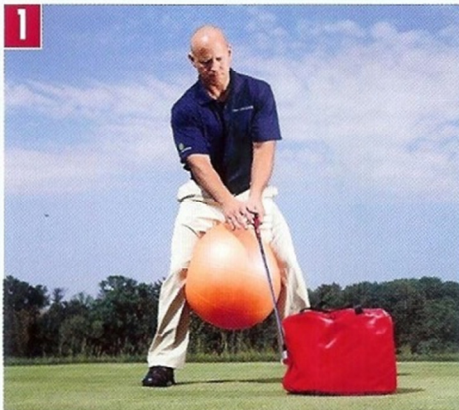
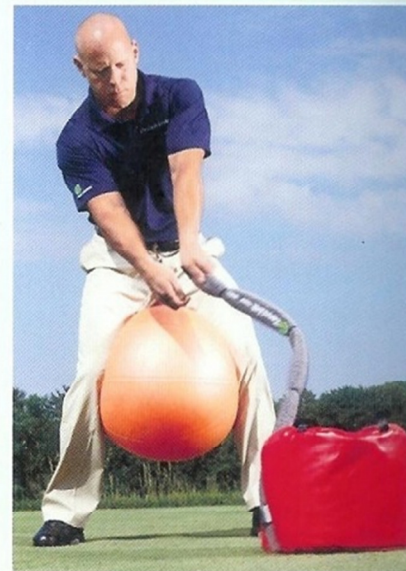
What it does: Teaches you to coil your upper body against a stable lower body.

How to do it: Place a Swiss ball between your legs and fold your arms across your chest, holding your driver along your shoulder line as shown. Rotate your torso back and forth while keeping your feet firmly connected to the ground. Make sure you maintain your balance.

**Towel Snap with Swiss Ball**

What it does: Teaches you to brace your lower body before impact so you can deliver your club to the ball more efficiently and with more speed.

How to do it: Place a Swiss ball between your legs and swing back to the top with both hands on a towel. Swing down and try to snap the towel at the ball (or impact bag) as you reach impact.

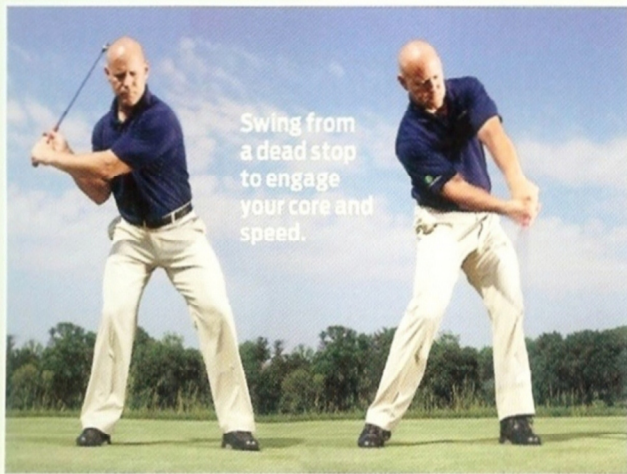


Train pulling with your left hand while pushing with your right.

Lead Arm Swing/Trail Arm Push with Swiss Ball

What it does: Coordinates both the pushing and pulling components of your swing. By doing so it promotes greater acceleration of the clubhead through the ball.

How to do it: Place a Swiss ball between your legs and grip the club with your right hand open but pressed firmly against the grip. Swing back and then down into an impact bag, pushing the club with your right hand while simultaneously pulling it with your left. Deliver the club into the bag by straightening your right arm fully.

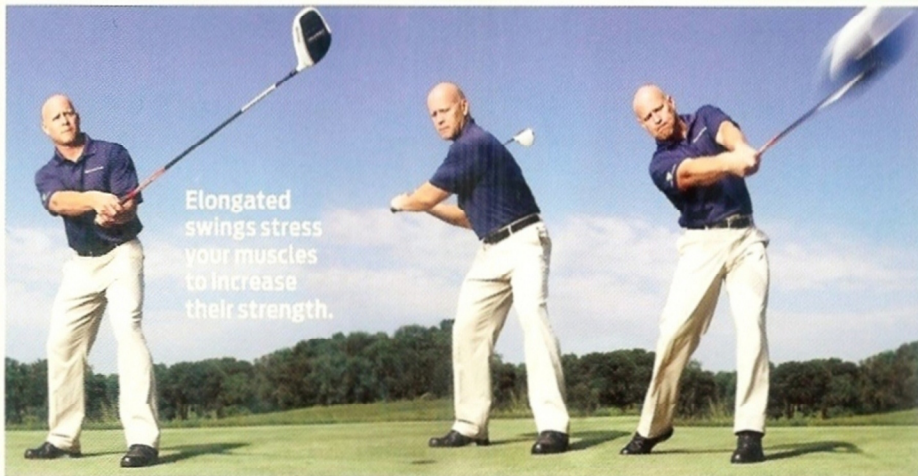


Swing from a dead stop to engage your core and speed.

Long-Response Plyometric Swings

What it does: Promotes a faster swing by placing additional stress on your muscles during these training swings.

How to do it: Start with your driver pointed toward the target and swing back quickly into your regular top position. As your arms become horizontal to the ground, begin swinging forward aggressively and into the finish. This can be done in the air or with an impact bag.

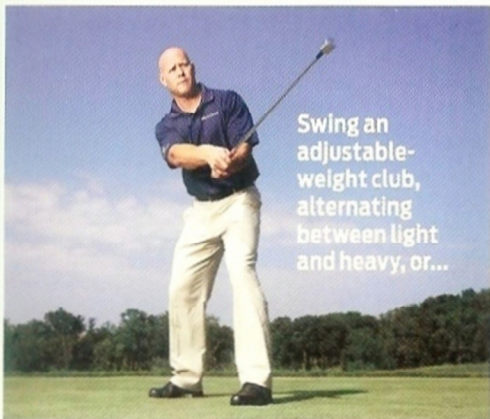


Elongated swings stress your muscles to increase their strength.

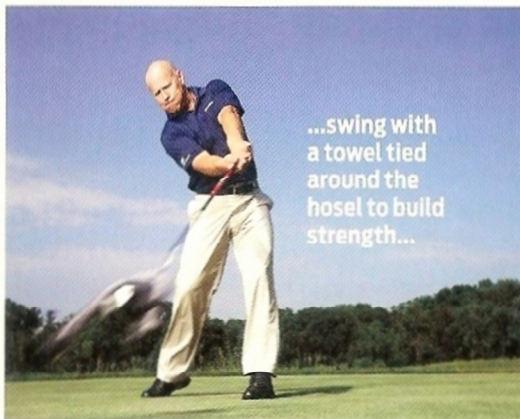
Short-Response Plyometric Swings

What it does: Develops a faster swing by engaging the core with lower body acceleration.

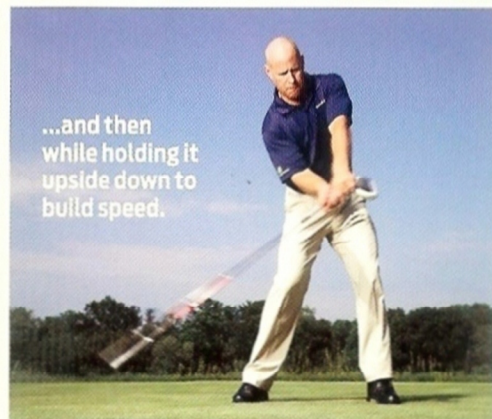
How to do it: Take your driver and assume a backswing so your arms are horizontal to the ground. From a dead stop, swing aggressively through to the release. This can be done in the air or into an impact bag.



Swing an adjustable-weight club, alternating between light and heavy, or...



...swing with a towel tied around the hosel to build strength...



...and then while holding it upside down to build speed.

Under-Speed and Over-Speed Training

What it does: Builds strength and speed in equal amounts and at the same time

How to do it: You can do this with an adjustable-weight club or by applying and removing weights to your driver, but a towel also does the trick. The key is to alternate swinging a heavier club (for strength) and a lighter club (for speed). Wrap the towel around the hosel and make five swings, then remove it and swing the club five times held upside down. Alternate repeatedly.



For more information on these exercises and Phase 3, visit www.golf.com/bestdrivingbook.