Upper/Lower Body Separation: How it can add length and efficiency to your golf shots

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Golf fitness is not only about creating bodies that are stronger and more flexible, but it is also about creating and improving movement patterns. Movement pattern training retrains your body to move effectively. The ability to separate your upper body from your lower body in the golf swing is a movement pattern that is essential to an efficient golf swing.

Upper body separation

Upper body separation also discussed in the previous article “The True Backswing”, allows the upper body and more specifically the upper back to rotate without movement from the lower body. The upper back (thoracic spine) should rotate between 30-45 degrees, depending on the golfer. By maintaining a stable lower body we can initiate the backswing with only upper body motion which begins the development of our “x” factor stretch and creates a very stable and balanced golf swing.

Exercise: Golf Posture Thoracic Rotations

- Start in golf posture with a neutral low back
- Maintain a stable lower body by contracting the deep core stabilizers and the glutes
- Slowly rotate your upper back you shoulder feel this between your shoulder blades
- Your shoulder should naturally turn under your chin

Lower body separation

Lower body separation allows the lower body or the pelvis to rotate without moving the upper body. Lower body separation is the first step to achieve the “lower body lead” and begin the kinematic sequence in the downswing. Just as the upper body begins the back swing with very little movement in the pelvis and the lower body, the lower body begins the downswing even when the upper body is still rotating back. This separation and lower body lead begins the kinematic sequence and increases the “x” factor stretch increasing the elastic power in the swing and therefore increasing swing efficiency and power.

Exercise: Stork Turns Unassisted

- Start in golf posture then curl one foot behind the other calf
- Keep the deep muscles of the core tight to stabilize your upper body
- Turn your pelvis or belt buckle to the side of the standing leg, DO NOT move only the leg
- Do this exercise on each leg
- Once you feel your pelvis turning go back to a regular golf stance with both feet on the ground and rotate your pelvis without moving your upper body
NOTE: Although upper-lower separation is a movement patter, it is dependent on the ability of the upper back and hip to create mobility and the core to create stability. It is suggested that you go through a thorough golf fitness analysis to determine where your limitations lie.