

The effect of weak back muscle on swing technique

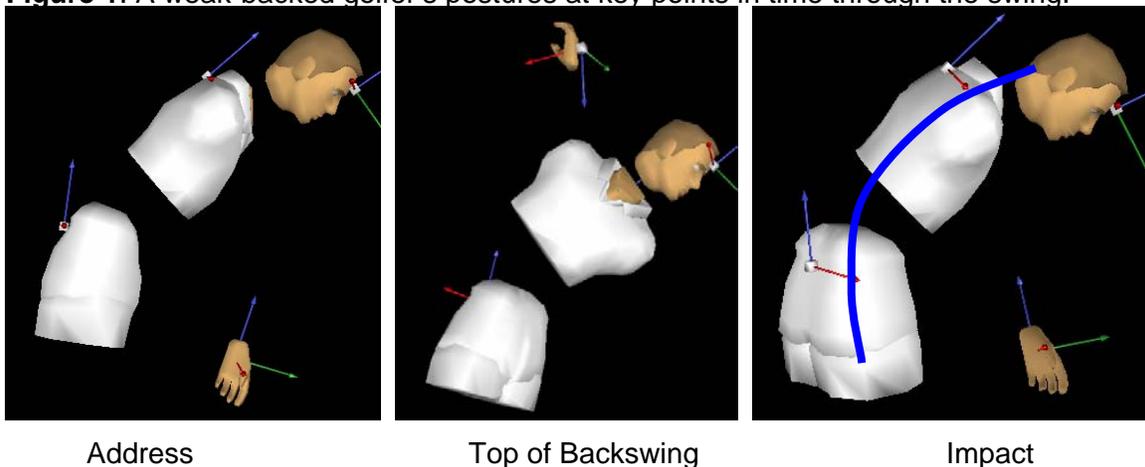
Much has been made recently of the importance of getting fit to play golf. There are those in the golf industry, who like me, have been trying to change the conservative view that pervaded the golf world that strength training and golf were not a good match. On the contrary, Tiger Woods has raised the bar by showing everyone that a strong and powerful body can give you the physique to drive the ball prodigious distances, hit the ball from difficult lies in the rough, and have the stamina to continue to perform at the end of a long tournament (a 90-hole PGA tour event, the President's Cup or Ryder Cup) as well as he did on the first day.

Golf fitness advisers have focussed on getting the body flexible in the right places and strong in the "core", with much emphasis on strengthening the abdominal muscles and the "pelvic floor". Whilst these emphases are crucial and provide the foundations for your developing a body that is in tune with the demands of golf, one needs to develop the muscles that produce power and energy, not just develop the muscles that control the core.

In the example that I have chosen to illustrate for you in this article, I have selected a golfer who has developed a swing pattern that is not ideal. It is my belief that the reason that this pattern has emerged is because he does not have the strength in the back (lower and thoracic) and the gluteal muscles to support the swing motion that many modern day coaches seek to have their students perform. He will now face the daunting task of gaining the necessary strength in the back accompanied by technical change in which he does not allow the pelvis to tilt backward through the contact zone.

In the diagram (Figure 1) below three images of this golfer are provided. You can see that even at address the pelvis is not bent very far forward. However, at impact you can see that the pelvis is tilting backward and the spine is "curled" forward. Whilst some of this type of motion is expected, the lack of strength in the back exacerbates the problem.

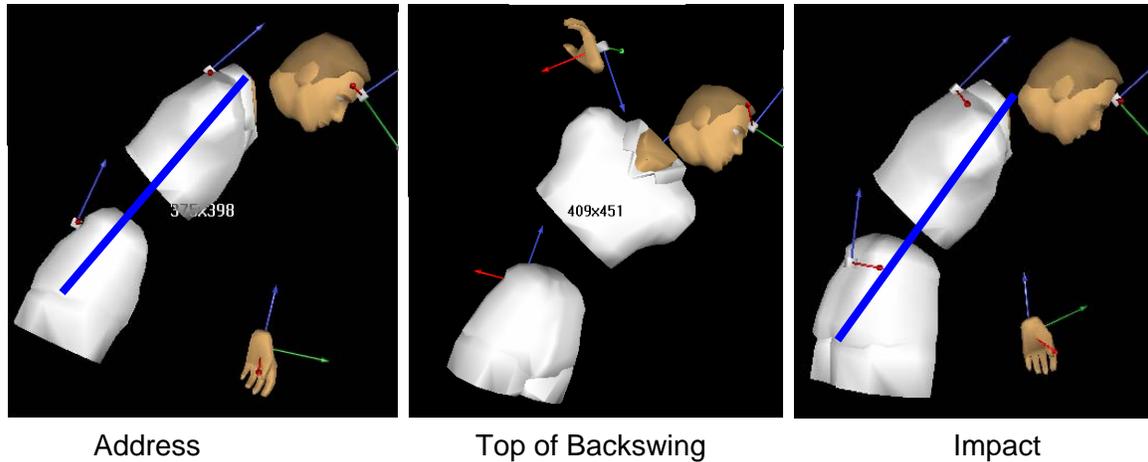
Figure 1. A weak-backed golfer's postures at key points in time through the swing.



The illustrations above should be compared with the golfer's swing images below. Notice in the pictures below, that the golfer, at address has his spine virtually straight. This angle is maintained at the top of the backswing and is virtually unchanged through

impact too. Most importantly you should note that his pelvis does not tilt backwards (look closely at the orientation of the small blue arrow on the posterior aspect of the pelvis of both golfers).

Figure 2. An example of excellent back postures at key points in time through the swing.



Appropriate exercises and training schedules can be obtained from Mr David Chettle of The Golf Athlete (www.thegolfathlete.com). You can contact him at david@thegolfathlete.com

For more information on improving your golf through physical interventions, our double CD “Better Body...Better Golf” will give you all the answers you need. We take you through the 10 most common swing faults and teach you how to assess yourself and which exercises are right to fix your individual faults. You can read more about this sensational product at www.thegolfathlete.com

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