

Ideas for Improving Your Golf Game during the Off-Season

Despite the fact that it seems the golf season has just begun, it will soon be time for barren trees, leaf-covered fairways, and brown coloured greens. Naturally, you should take advantage and play as much as possible until the courses actually close but once that happens, there are many things you can do to improve your game during the off-season.

Ironically, once the courses do close, the first thing you should do is take a break! This may seem counter-intuitive but your body needs time to recover. The golf swing is a very repetitive motion and can wear down joints and muscles for those who play frequently throughout the summer months. This does not mean you should spend the entire winter lying on the sofa. Once you feel rested, try yoga, play hockey, or take up something new - there are aspects of many other sports or activities that translate well into golf. Furthermore, it's good for your mental well-being to recharge by participating in something other than golf for a while.

Another thing to consider is starting a golf-specific fitness program or building some golf-specific exercises into your existing workout plan. The off-season is actually the best time to get your body ready for next season or that winter golf getaway. Your workout program should focus on developing and improving your balance, core strength, mobility and flexibility. The Titleist Performance Institute (www.mytpi.com) has developed a golf-specific physical assessment to measure those key components of golf fitness. A TPI Certified Golf Fitness Instructor can perform the assessment and issue to you a customized golf fitness program designed by the TPI. Another option is to invest in a Personal Trainer (preferably one who has a good understanding of the demands of the sport of golf) to create for you a golf fitness program – training the wrong way can hurt your game or leave you prone to injury so it's in your best interest to see someone qualified. Once you get the program, make sure to start slowly and progress through the off-season – you don't want to get bored by repeating the same workout for months. Furthermore, your body will adapt to the workload and you will stop seeing progress should you not alter your workouts. Again, this is where a qualified Personal Trainer or Golf Fitness Instructor can help.

Finally, you can also hone your technical skills by working on your game indoors. Many golf courses offer indoor lessons during the winter. While hitting off mats or into nets may not be nearly as exciting as ripping that 300 yard drive down the middle of the fairway, this is an excellent time to work on your set-up, pre-shot routine, and swing mechanics. Take a look at your swing on video so you can see what you are doing. You can also work on your putting indoors by practicing on a carpeted surface. See your local teaching pro for a putting lesson before season's end and ask them to suggest drills to ensure your practices are both valuable and enjoyable.

Ultimately, try to enjoy the change in routine. Using your time away from the course to rest and recharge, improve your golf fitness, or work on technical skills are all potential ways to improve your game despite being unable to play golf - this should make you even more eager to return to the course next season!

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