

Skill Acquisition in the Golf Swing

The Hip Rotation on Torso Drill

New complex motor skills can be acquired with practice. The following drill progressions are designed to assist you in re-sequencing the downswing portion of your golf swing—that is, promote independent motion or dissociation of the hips and shoulders (lower and upper body). During the early stages of your practice, rapid improvements in timing and movement quality can occur, and eventually, with sufficient practice, the training leads to automaticity, that is, you can perform the movement without conscious thought.

These drills are best performed away from the practice tee and away from the golf course. The key is to practice frequently for discrete periods of time. Ingraining this motor pattern so that it becomes a less conscious move is the aim, since during the golf swing when load and speed of movement are increased, the most dominant pattern of movement—the ‘old’ pattern—is the one most likely to emerge.

When you are performing the movement skill, be aware of the quality of the movement pattern at all times. At each stage when you have developed competency, gradually increase the speed of the movement as long as you can still maintain the quality of the movement. Signs of poor movement quality: Hips — lateral (side to side) movement or tilting (up and down) instead of pure rotation; any movement of the shoulders or upper body in the initial stages.

Recommendations:

Duration: 1-2 mins per session

Frequency: Daily

Step 1 - Hip Rotation with Stabilization with Upright Posture

Stand tall, preferably in front of a mirror with your hands touching a chair or bench in order to stabilize the shoulders/upper body. Try to rotate the hips forward and backward (imagine you are swiveling in a barrel) allowing for slight flexion/extension of the knees. Try not to lean on the chair/bench but lightly touch with your hands. If you still cannot keep the upper body stationary, make a fist with your hands or hold tightly to something which will better activate your upper body musculature to stabilize. The abdominals (particularly the oblique muscles) should be helping to create the movement. Do not progress until you can rotate the hips easily while stabilizing the shoulders. Increase the speed of the hip rotation when as long as the movement quality is maintained – slow to fast.



As you improve, lighten your grip on the chair (stabilizing object) so that you rely on it less.

Step 2 - Hip Rotation with Stabilization in golf posture

Assume a golf stance (bending from the hips, knees slightly flexed) again, preferably in front of a mirror. Rotate the hips with only a light touch of hands on bench/chair to stabilize the upper body. Then proceed to only stabilizing with one hand instead of both. Slow to fast at both stages.



The Hip Rotation Drill Progression Cont.

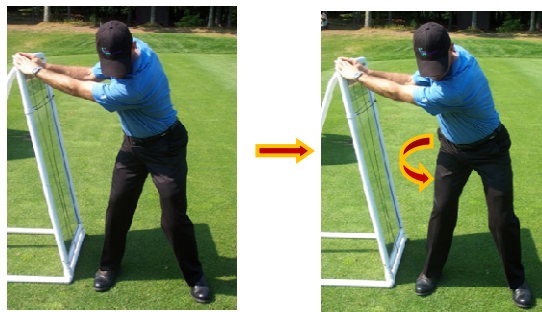
Step 3 - Hip Rotation without Stabilization

Maintain golf posture (bending from the hips) and face the mirror; cross your arms on your chest and rotate your hips/lower body while maintaining the original position of your shoulders/upper body. Slow to fast.



Step 4 - Hip Rotation TOB position with Stabilization

Ensure that the wall/mirror is to your right if you are a right hander. From golf posture at address, turn your upper body with arms somewhat outstretched, placing your palms/fingertips on the wall/mirror. Allow only a small turn of the hips while making a full shoulder turn. This position should approximate the top of the backswing (TOB). Attempt to rotate the hips in both directions from this position. Slow to fast.



Step 5 - Hip Rotation TOB position without Stabilization

Assume the TOB position crossing your arms on your chest. Attempt to rotate the hips in both directions from this position. Slow to fast.



The Hip Rotation Drill Progression Cont.

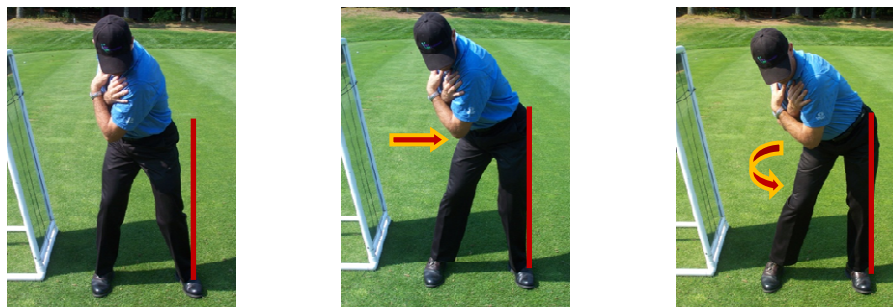
Step 6 - Shift and Rotate with Stabilization

Return to the TOB position described in Step 4, and add the lateral shift of the lower body (this occurs prior to the rotation of the hips). Then add in the hip rotation. Gradually work to blend these two movements. Slow to fast.



Step 7 - Hip Rotation TOB position without Stabilization

Assume the TOB position crossing your arms on your chest. Attempt to rotate the hips in both directions from this position. Slow to fast.



Step 8 - Body Drill

Finally, put all the components together into a body drill. Assume a golf posture crossing your arms on your chest and face the mirror. We recommend that initially you break the body drill down step by step to ensure movement quality. Speed up the body motion slowly blending the steps together.

Address → TOB → Lateral shift with hips → hip rotation → upper body rotation → follow-through

Arms crossed on your chest → arms swinging → holding the club

Slow → Fast