

The True Backswing: The Roll of Upper Back Mobility

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The backswing

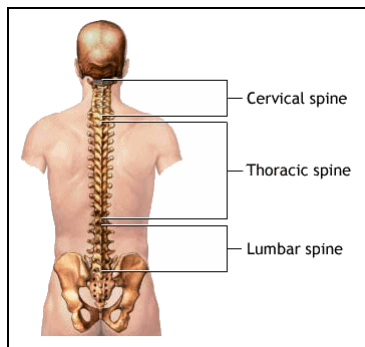


The backswing is crucial to a consistent, efficient and powerful golf swing. The backswing should begin with a one piece takeaway where we have been taught that the shoulders, arms, hands and clubs move back at the same time. As much as this is true, starting with the shoulders is not technically correct. Starting the takeaway with the shoulders can actually cause a fake turn in the backswing causing the arms to lead the backswing creating a less consistent, less efficient and less powerful golf swing.



In order to avoid a 'fake' turn in the backswing, the upper back should actually initiate the one piece takeaway. It is important at this time that we start to understand the roll of the upper back (thoracic spine) in the golf backswing.

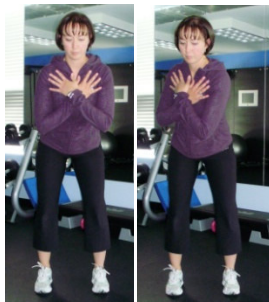
The upper back (thoracic spine)



The thoracic spine runs approximately from the bottom of the neck to the end of the rib cage. This part of the spine is considered mobile and when rotating should be able to rotate approx 45 degrees. If the thoracic spine is tight, the body must find other means of creating rotation. The body will compensate for the lack of movement with movement in a stable joint such as the scapular –thoracic joint (shoulder blade). Because this joint is not made to create movement, inefficiencies in the golf swing are definite and the chance for injuries to the shoulder, forearm and wrist increase dramatically.

Incorporating the upper back into the takeaway

To incorporate a 'true' backswing into your golf swing, begin to think of the one piece takeaway starting from the upper back and not the shoulders. To help you get awareness of your upper back movement start with these easy exercises.



Upper back rotation movement pattern—do not allow lower body to move. Do a total of 10 rotations both sides.



Kneeling upper back mobility exercise – always rotate towards your standing leg. Do not allow the legs to move. Do a total of 6 rotations per side.



When performing these exercises, picture the mid back rotating and you should feel some stretching in between the shoulder blades. Shoulder blades should remain very still to maximize upper back rotation. DO NOT push these exercises to the point of discomfort you should feel no more than a stretch.

