



CAPTA NEWS

Volume 5, Issue 3

March 2010

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The Golf Swing and Preventing Shoulder Injury

By Maria Carroll, PTA, CGFI

The Shoulder girdle is quite complex and includes 4 rotator cuff muscles. The supraspinatus, infraspinatus, teres minor and subscapularis. The muscles often get overlooked when strengthening the shoulder girdle. The rotator cuff muscles stabilize the humeral head into the glenoid fossa creating the glenohumeral joint. If there is too much laxity in these muscles then every time you move the shoulder they get pinched within the joint capsule and grind with movement. The possibilities of a tear, partial tear, impingement, frozen shoulder or adhesive capsulitis are not uncommon with a lax glenohumeral joint. When you watch a golf swing, it is obvious the shoulder muscles are needed to create a powerful swing, but not so obvious on how the shoulder functions.

The *subscapularis* is the most active rotator cuff muscle as it generates power into the golf swing. This muscle internally rotates the humerus. It can also flex, extend, adduct, or abduct the GH (glenohumeral) joint depending on the position of the arm.

The *supraspinatus* assists in elevating the humerus at the shoulder joint. It has a minimal role in shoulder movement however it still needs to be strengthened.

The *infraspinatus* and *teres minor* muscles externally rotate the humerus. In order to have a proper backswing and follow-through, these muscles should be flexible on the lead arm and on the trail arm. (The lead arm for a right handed golfer is the left and the right arm is the trail arm. Vice versa for the left handed golfer.)

Stability in the cervicothoracic region and the shoulder girdle are needed to safely swing a golf club and generate club head speed at impact. This is achieved by :

- 1) stretching the subscapularis and strengthening the rhomboids
- 2) stretching the pectoralis major and strengthening the serratus anterior
- 3) stretching the upper trapezius fibers and strengthening the middle and lower trapezius muscle fibers.



Stay tuned for next months edition to see how you stretch and strengthen the shoulder girdle to maximize your golf swing and prevent shoulder injury!

