



What Will Move, Moves! Compensation and Rotation Restrictions

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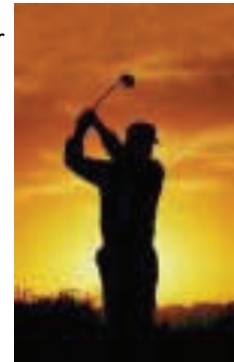
Cybernetics is the science that deals with the way systems are geared toward reaching particular goals. Once the goal is clear, the mechanisms are put in place and feedback is necessary to ascertain whether the methods have been successful or not. When a golf coach or great book gives you an visual image to follow, your brain sets the target. The ideal, and indeed the assumption here, is that the body will just figure out how to get it done somehow. In many cases, this is a whale of an assumption, as the body is limited by restrictions and old injuries that prevent full functioning. There is no way that a body part that is restricted is going to function efficiently in such a complex motion such as the golf swing.

When the golf swing demands full spinal rotation, the body tries to deliver. If the golfer cannot fully rotate because of these soft-tissue restrictions, other parts of the body try to make up the difference. Here indeed, is the big dilemma; what will move moves. When the back cannot fully rotate, other areas are called upon to make up the difference. These areas/muscles that substitute for back rotation may have the capability to help, but three potential problems exist:

- They can never fully make up the deficit

- They will alter swing mechanics because of inefficiency

- They never signed up for this job in the first place! These muscles/ areas are now much more susceptible to injury because they are doing too much, and in a mechanically unsound way.



What are the consequences of tight spinal muscles? If the mid-back cannot rotate fully, the hips will try to compensate in both the backswing and follow-through. Unfortunately, hip muscles are often tighter than the back. The movement has to come from somewhere, and what is left is the shoulders and often the arms. Not only will overuse of the arm produce frustrating swing faults, it may also lead to 'golfer's elbow'. As in any system, the result of an action can be far removed from its cause. Tight back and hip muscles produce pain in the arm. Go figure.

Here is a simple test you can do at home to check your rotational capacity, provided by Bob Kremer, the fitness director at Concordia College in Bronxville.

Spinal-rotation test: Lie on your back with your knees in the air. Slowly lower your legs to one side. If you have normal spinal rotation, your legs will lie flat on the floor without the opposite shoulder coming off the floor. The greater the distance your bottom leg is from the floor when the opposite shoulder begins to rise, the more restricted your spinal rotation.

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