

Better Swing Balance

By **Dr Will Kalla**

Photography by **Leslie Tan**

You have just meticulously positioned yourself at the tee, ensuring perfect alignment with the ball. Swing posture, check. Grip, check. Stance, check. Wind, check. Perfect. You brace yourself, and execute what you expect to be the perfect swing. However, just as your club makes contact with the ball, your heart sinks, and you wince in disappointment as the ball sails through the air, off the fairway. Familiar? It may have nothing to do with your technique, as Dr. Will Kalla, Doctor of Chiropractic at Precision Spine will tell you.

How to Begin

Choose a suitably sized stability ball, your knees and hips should be at a 90-degree angle when seated on top. The ball should be inflated till it is firm, but still allowing you to sink in a bit when you sit or kneel.

Basic Exercises



Start by sitting on the ball, feet off the ground. This may not be as easy as it sounds as you need to be able to control of your stomach muscles. Initially, you may require some form of assistance, either holding onto someone's hand, or holding onto a bar for support.

Intermediate Exercises

Intermediate Kneel



This level is where you progress to a kneeling stand on the ball from your four-point position. The challenge is finding the central point of gravity within yourself, and managing to hold it while you move from one position to another atop the ball.

Advanced Exercises

Advanced Swing



Once you are able to comfortably maintain this position for more than 30 seconds without assistance, you may start to assimilate in slow motion, the gesture of a half swing. Reaching this far on your balancing is a feat in itself.

Posture, flexibility and strength are the most commonly emphasised fundamentals of good swing mechanics. Balance, however, usually takes a back seat in this equation, and sadly, its importance often neglected. Balance in fact, is the crucial factor that provides full control over your swing and being in perfect balance is basically about maintaining centre of gravity (CoG) at all times.

The CoG is extremely sensitive to any movements in the body, and any disturbance to its equilibrium

may result in a momentary loss of balance. In golf, all it takes is that split-second loss of balance, and the swing is ruined. In most cases, it happens so quickly that it remains undetected by the golfer. Therefore, the more efficiently one is able to adapt and compensate gravitational shifts, the better the level of balance and stability attained.

The good news is that balance can be trained, and is easily achieved with a few simple exercises. One great way of improving balance is by training on an unstable surface.

When faced with instability, to prevent from falling, the body is required to compensate to maintain a sense of natural balance.

Stability-Ball Training

Training with a stability ball comes highly recommended, as it challenges balance, ultimately forcing the body to accomplish total control over its CoG. This in turn results in an unconscious improvement of muscle co-ordination as well as the speed of muscle contraction. You will notice

as you progress with the stability ball, that your overall movement patterns used in your game are more co-ordinated and fluid. Functional training on a stability ball also increases strength in the body's core muscles, namely the abdominal, lower back, and abdominal oblique muscles. As the strength of these muscles improve, you will notice a more natural transference of power from body to club.

The result, a power-packed swing with minimal effort.



Next step is to try to balance on all fours atop the stability ball. Keep your knees apart, at shoulder width and place your palms at least a foot in front of your knees. You may need someone to place their palm on your back to provide stability while you are on all fours. When you are confident, try kneeling for 30 seconds at a time without assistance. Repeat this exercise 3 times in a row.

Complete Swing



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The advanced level of stability training is to actually perform your golf swing, with a golf club, in the kneeling position. You begin with a half swing, then move on to a full swing once you have mastered the former. This exercise mimics your actual swing while forcing your core muscles to work in optimal co-ordination to maintain your CoG despite the shifting pattern in your body. This should be performed slowly at the initial stage and with caution, to avoid falls and injuries. Until next time, happy golfing.