



Faster, Longer, Stronger, Better!

Practising on the golf course and driving range can improve your game, but so can alternative workout routines. Their moves will give you that needed edge. **By SOH WEI**

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FOR A GOOD PUTT

Try: Yoga

The philosophy: Yoga poses, whether static or flowing (smoothly transitioning from one pose to another), are designed to stretch and improve the flexibility of muscles and joints.

How it benefits golfers: Most people miss their putts because they line their bodies up inaccurately. Blame it on a rigid pelvis, which doesn't turn with your torso during the swing. This causes your centre line to waiver and your ball to veer off-course. This is where yoga can help. "Holding a stretch for 30 seconds or longer is three to four times more effective than repeat stretches," says Sukhdev Singh, a yoga master at True Yoga and guru to top local golfers such as Mardan Mamat. "Stretching loosens tight muscle fibres, making them long and lean, which in turn improves your range of movement."

True account: "I didn't realise the importance of flexibility in golf until I started practising yoga a few months ago. Now when I'm at the driving range, I find that I can maximise my movement better."



— *Koh Pei Yin, 25, graphic designer*

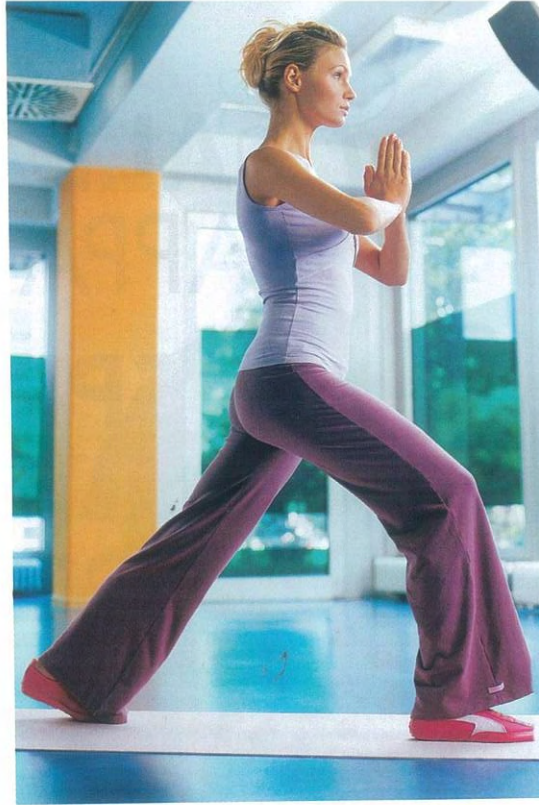
Where: True Yoga, Level 4, Pacific Plaza, tel: 6733-9555; Levels 26 and 27, Ocean Towers, tel: 6536-3390.

FOR BETTER ALIGNMENT AND BALL CONTROL

Try: Pilates

The philosophy: Pilates exercises are about helping you keep good alignment, posture and control. This is done through a series of movements that stem from the core muscles.

How it benefits golfers: The muscles in our body are designed to work in balanced symmetry. But when you have been hitting hard at the driving range, you can overtax those muscles



you use to execute a swing and develop muscle imbalance. Such imbalance can interfere with your swing motion, says Daniel Dittmar, senior instructor and owner of Focus Pilates. This makes it difficult to control the ball and often creates excessive wear and tear on your body, leading to injuries, he adds.

True account: "Pilates has helped improve my core strength, flexibility, posture and, most importantly, stability. My golf game is more enjoyable now, as my swing has improved with more accuracy and power. Plus, I no longer suffer from any pain and tension the next day."



– Sharon Tob, 36, business development manager

Where: Focus Pilates, #08-03/04 Tong Building, tel: 6733-8785; #12-00 Malacca Centre, tel: 6235-3938.

FOR A MORE POWERFUL SWING Try: Kettlebell Workout

The philosophy: Kettlebells – essentially an iron ball with a handle – train your body as a whole. Because a kettlebell's mass is offset from the handle, lifting it forces you to use your core muscles, not just those in your arms. Plus, compared to dumbbells, the exercises relate better to real-life activities such as squatting, picking up

something heavy or swinging a golf club. Tiger Woods and Michelle Wie owe their powerful drives to training with these.

How it benefits golfers: To swing a club, one requires the muscles in your buttocks, hamstrings and lower back to work in a coordinated movement, says Lorena Loschini, a certified kettlebell coach with Singapore Kettlebells. This is exactly what the body does during a golf swing. Also, a kettlebell swing emphasises generating force from the hips, not the arms, which is similar to the golf swing, she explains.

True account: "Kettlebell training has improved my golf game tremendously – my golf swing has become more powerful. I am able to play longer as a result."



– Lynne Tob, 41, manager

Where: Singapore Kettlebells, an online company that conducts classes every Saturday at Punggol Park. For more information, call 9177-4001 or visit www.kettlebells.sg to register.

FOR A LONGER DRIVE Try: TRX Suspension Trainer

The philosophy: Yes, this Y-shaped strap system is used in Navy Seals training, but don't let that intimidate you. The exercises done on the adjustable straps are familiar ones like planks,

lateral pull-downs and sit-ups – except you won't be using any machine or dumbbell. Instead, the TRX suspends your limbs and harnesses your body weight for resistance.

How it benefits golfers: Longer drives are powered by strong core muscles, but doing crunches alone won't work, says Iduma Ortega, TRX instructor at Sky Pilates. Rope in these muscles on the TRX to build a solid foundation in your hip and pelvis – the very source of a more powerful swing.

True account: "I like that the TRX works multiple muscles in a single exercise, so you get more done in each session. The moves require body



tension, which strengthens the core muscles and helps increase my golf drive."

– Wong Wai Peng, 31, assistant regional marketing manager

Where: Sky Pilates, #05-03 Liat Towers, tel: 6100-7597.

To try out specific exercises for each workout, go to herworld.com.