

## Golf Conditioning: Phase Two Off Season Power Training

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Today I am going to talk about phase 2, the power phase. In this phase you will work on making big gains in strength and power to really increase your driving distance. We are going to focus on a lot of strength exercises in this phase but you must NOT neglect mobility and flexibility training.

A good warm-up is essential in this phase also and should never be skipped. Ideally you would like to spend at least four to six weeks working in this phase but eight weeks would be great. You want to focus on the large muscle groups like the chest, back, hips and core. Stay away from machines as much as possible and try to do more dumbbell and bodyweight drills that will also incorporate the smaller stabilizing muscles also. Do whole body workouts three days a week. Let's take a look at some sample exercises for phase 2.

Warm-up; The warm-up can stay the same as it was during phase one. You want to get a sweat going to really get your muscles and joints warmed up to reduce injury risk. Forward and sideways lunges, inch worm, bear crawl forward and backward, walking knee to chest, walking straight leg raise, and carioca are great warm-up exercises.

After the warm up I like to alternate performing either core stabilization exercises or mobility exercises. On one day perform core exercises like bird dog, prone plank, side plank, crunches, and diagonal upward and downward chops. Follow these with hip and thoracic mobility exercises including foam roller mobilization. On other days perform the core exercises toward the end of the work out. Training the core while fatigued is important for developing good spine stability. I like to do the mobility exercises after the warm-up. You will work hip mobility pretty good during the warm-up but make sure to do the hip rotation exercises as this is a key component to reducing the risk of low back injury. This is also a good time to do foam roll exercises for soft tissue work and thoracic spine mobilization.

After you finish these exercises you are ready to hit the power exercises. Focus on the large muscle groups and if time is a factor perform a circuit. Always work the big three-chest, hips, and back. A good start would be a chest exercise like push-ups, bench press, or dumbbell bench press. Follow this with a leg exercise like squats, lunges, step ups, or split squats. Then incorporate a back exercise such as lat pulls, vertical or horizontal pull-ups, or bent over rows. A good circuit example would be: 15 pushups followed by 15 squats and then 10 pull ups. Rest 1-2 minutes and repeat. Perform 3-4 times. Vary the reps depending on your ability and ease. You can vary the exercises each time and substitute as you like but always do at least one of each back, chest and leg exercise. Most of the power in your back swing comes from your hips and chest muscles but you need a strong core to transfer this power. Neglecting to work your back muscles can lead to imbalances which can cause injury especially in your shoulders.

After the big three is a good time to add more explosive exercises like medicine ball overhead slams, diagonal and rotational throws. These can be very strenuous on your low back, especially the rotational throws, so make sure you brace your core and use correct form. Elastic band or tubing diagonal chops both down and upward should be added now.

Stability ball work can be incorporated in this phase including bridges, pushups, reachouts, hamstring curls and medicine ball rotation and overhead while lying on the ball. Any other supplemental exercises can be added in this phase also. Exercises like dumbbell press, lateral raises, bicep curls, tricep pushdowns or dips, calf raises and wrist dumbbell work should also be added in this phase. If you notice any substantial weakness in one area this is the phase to make corrections. For example, if you can do 30 push-ups but only 2 pull-ups then you are unbalanced regarding back strength. Focus on more sets of back exercises including lat pulls, assisted and eccentric pull-ups and bent over rows.

Finish your workout with flexibility work including stretches that focus on the lats, hips, chest, and hamstrings. Hold each stretch about 30 seconds and repeat 2-3 times. The next article will address phase three, the season preparation phase.

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