



SHOULDERING THE LOAD

Ease tension in that important part of the body for golf with a breathing technique that turns stress into energy. *by Bill Westerlund and Scott Bartley*

PROPER CORE BREATHING is perfect for easing stress and increasing muscle strength. The main place to concentrate is the shoulders, where tightness can limit your range of motion.

To ease shoulder stress golfers must refocus their breathing to “replace” mental stress with a physical “feeling” when swinging the club. From an internal point of view, your breathing has four segments that are linked to create energy and get strength flowing to your muscles:

Inhale: Breathe in through your nose and get the air into your lower abdomen.

Pause: Hold the air in to condense and coordinate the energy effect.

Exhale: Pull your bellybutton toward your tailbone to release the air in the forms of energy and strength.

Pause: You’ll have the least amount of energy at this brief stage, but an increased force of action will return with your next breath.

If a golfer is mentally stressing, there’s a breathing pattern supporting it. You can change that by directing the energy (or stress) in your shoulders to your hands and feet. Begin with a focused thought directed at your midsection that will trigger your core muscles to release the stress in your shoulders. Exhaling through your mouth and pulling your midsection in will enable the stored energy

to be sent to your hands, feet and muscles of choice. This transforms your shoulders from a blockage of energy into a transmission of strength for your swing.

If your focus is to lessen shoulder stress, exhale through your mouth; if it’s to relieve overall muscle tension, exhale through your nose. Either approach will turn stress into energy for more power in your swing and a better mental state throughout the round. **SG**

Bill Westerlund, PGA, and energy coach Scott Bartley teach at Mission Bay Golf Course & Practice Center in San Diego. For more information, call (760) 613-6368.