

COOL FASHIONS TO PUT A SPRING IN YOUR STEP  
RETHINK YOUR WEDGES • CENTRAL COAST HOT SPOTS • RIVIERA RECAP

# SOUTHWEST GOLF

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## WOMEN'S ISSUE

KEYS TO THE KIA  
CLASSIC - AVIARA  
LOCKS UP PRIME  
LPGA TOUR EVENT

MICHAEL WHAN AND  
PAULA CREAMER Q&As

PGA OF AMERICA  
LOOKING TO CONNECT

AMY ALCOTT  
CHERISHES TIES TO  
KRAFT NABISCO

\*LPGA star  
Paula Creamer  
will be among  
the players to  
watch at the  
Kia Classic

**It's OK to  
inhale!**  
*(Just don't forget  
to exhale)*

**EASY RIDER:  
JOCKEY  
JOE TALAMO  
FINDS  
RELAXATION  
ON THE  
LINKS**



🌐 WIN PASSES TO THE LPGA'S FIRST MAJOR OF THE YEAR! SEE PAGE 12 FOR DETAILS.

# Breathtaking discovery

Learning how to breathe for less tension and more energy is part of the lesson plan for a golf instruction duo in San Diego.

**U**nlike President Clinton, I inhaled. A lot. I did my fair share of exhaling, too. But I was just following orders during a recent lesson on proper breathing techniques.

Yes, you read that right. I drove to San Diego to learn how to breathe. Apparently, most of us don't do that basic part of living correctly when we golf.

"The way we breathe determines how much strength we have," said Scott Bartley, co-founder and owner of The Power of Core Breathing 4 Golf, an instruction plan that links mind, body and breath. "We breathe differently when we're happy, angry, nervous or participating in a sport."

How about when we're confused? Because that's what I was, thinking that the last thing I needed was more thoughts in my head before or during the swing – particularly when it's something as natural as breathing. But, as Bartley pointed out, everything changes as we age. Infants are belly breathers who naturally take deep breaths into their abdomen, meaning that the stomach muscles (think core) are constantly moving. But at about 30 our breathing grows shallower and the intake of air rarely gets below diaphragm level.

"When breath is held in the chest it robs you of your range of motion," Bartley said. "That's because your shoulders get tense and rise during the golf swing instead of being relaxed and lower, which is what you need for less tension and more swing speed. To have a more powerful swing, you have to release the muscle tension and barriers that block the flow of energy. Proper breathing can do that in seconds."

But it can take months to learn and feel natural. Therefore, a Breathing 101 course, if you will, would include these points:

- > **Inhale** through your nose and force the air to your lower abdomen.
- > **Expand** your abdomen by pushing



WHEN BREATH IS HELD IN THE CHEST IT  
ROBS YOU OF YOUR RANGE OF MOTION  
... AND BLOCKS THE FLOW OF ENERGY.

your bellybutton out and down at a 45-degree angle.

> **Exhale** through your lips, pull your bellybutton in toward your tailbone and tighten your gluteal muscles to keep your shoulders relaxed.

> **Practice** for 10 minutes, three times a day. Work on keeping your shoulders neutral and down and feel your lower core muscles engaging.

Bill Westerlund, the swing instructor portion of The Power of Core-Breathing 4 Golf, said that when Bartley approached him five years ago he was cautious but intrigued. The former feeling soon dissolved and he now has a healthier outlook on life.

"I feel more energetic," said Westerlund, who has been an instructor for about 30 years. "It took a while to get used to, but I try to introduce core breathing into every lesson. If there's

time, I give them the information and, if they see the value, they'll work on it. It can't be learned in one session, but the students I see six to 12 times a year are better because of the core breathing techniques."

So is it crazy talk or a breath of fresh air? I'll have to admit that when I addressed the ball, breathed in and paused the breath in my lower stomach it felt like my core and lower body were more stable. That enabled my shoulders to feel lower and looser, and when I exhaled at impact I felt a sensation of energy being released.

Then we went to the monitor and my poor posture and over-the-top swing, among other flaws, were hard to ignore. I'm not sure I'll ever be able to breathe easy when it comes to seeing my swing on a video screen. **SG**

— Al Petersen