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GFM Advisory Team Member,
Dave Herman

STRENGTH Training for the Junior Golfer

When it comes to strength training for a junior athlete, it's important to choose the best training techniques and methods that are the safest and most beneficial for their developing bodies. Resistance training is one such technique. It refers to a specialized method of conditioning that uses progressive resistance loads and a variety of equipment such as elastic bands, medicine balls, free weights and even your own body weight. Resistance training should not be confused with other terms such as body building, power lifting and weight lifting.

When junior golfers begin resistance training, it is important to choose activities that match their learning ability. PGA tour player Trevor Immelman likes elastic bands for juniors, because he feels that "rubber bands are a great tool for junior golfers to use because they are basically just stretching and strengthening in a way that doesn't load the joints while their body is still developing and growing."



Research shows children as young as six years old can usually do resistance types of activities (push-ups and sit-ups) as long as they use proper technique and are monitored by a professional instructor, or golf coach.

Typically, it is a good idea for younger children to stay away from heavier weights. As they grow older and stronger they can begin to move into increased levels of resistance. A trained professional can help make these adjustments. It is also a good idea to take your child to a doctor for a check-up before beginning any training program.

There are many benefits to a junior golfer's mind and body when resistance training is introduced

early-on in their golf game. Here are just a few of the many benefits of resistance training for your junior golfer:

It has been proven that young athletes who resistance train feel better about themselves and have more self confidence and increased athletic performance.

Realizing the positive results of flexibility and strength training at an early age will help promote discipline of the right way to do things. Learning this lesson while they are young will pay off with their efforts in the long run.



Resistance training that works on the lower body can increase core stability and is also extremely helpful in developing a solid base to build a world class swing and rotation.


Upper body exercises are extremely important for the female junior golfer because this is an area in which women tend to be weaker. Resistance training can actually help strengthen this area, thus enabling them to hold their position at the top of their swing and generate the power that they need.

Ligaments and tendons are fortified, muscles grow stronger and become more efficient and bone density and body composition are improved by adding lean muscle and decreasing body fat with this type of training. There are overall major improvements in motor skills, balance, control and body awareness.

As you can see, there are many benefits to the junior golfer when resistance training is used properly. All of the above, factor into making your child a better athlete and competitor.

I've been fortunate enough to train children through adolescence, taking them directly into the pro and collegiate stages. I generally stay with elastic bands, medicine balls, and speed, agility quickness training until the age of 13 1/2, and then begin to move into free weights and cables as the child moves into his adolescent stages. Using bands at an early age gives the child a strong foundation to build on while learning and improving their golf game.

Resistance training, like any type of athletic training requires proper technique and someone to monitor the progress and teach them the proper skills needed to master the exercises. The most important thing however, when working with and encouraging junior golfers is to keep it fun, stimulating and use positive feedback. The "no pain, no gain" philosophy will only discourage the young golfer from wanting to resistance train.

Remember that any type of training that is fun, entertaining, and progressively challenging will keep your junior golfer stimulated and one step ahead of his game. 

Dave Herman is a Professional Sports Performance Coach, Founder of the Athleticity™ training program, co-author of Ernie Els Guide to Golf Fitness, and GFM Advisory Team Member. Dave trains many professional and junior athletes in Orlando, Florida. www.athleticity.com.

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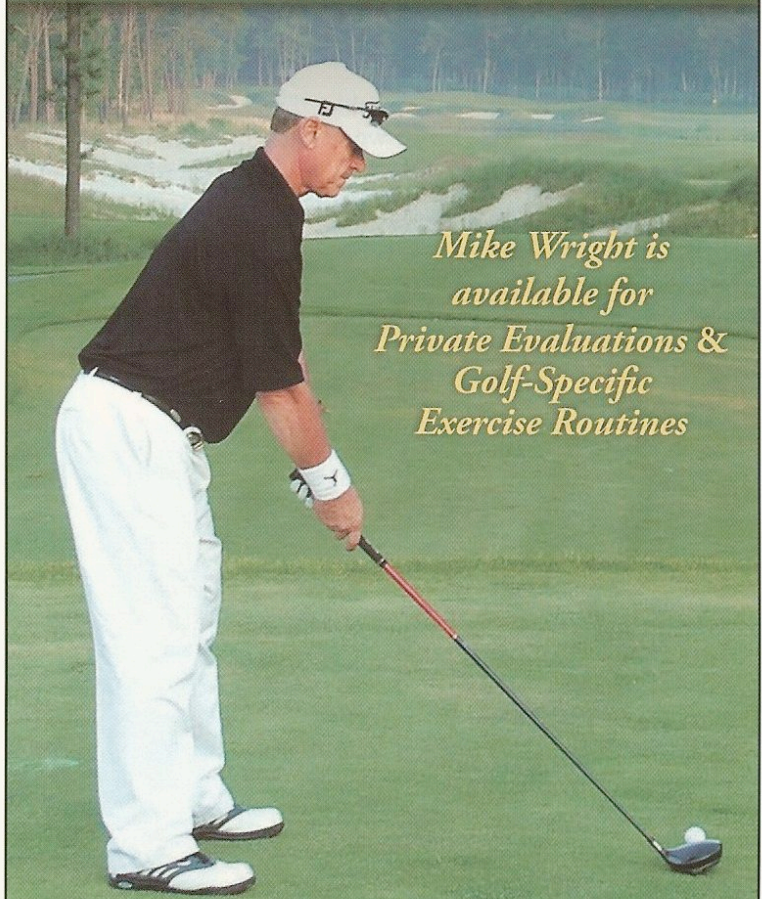
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