

Need for Speed

CARLO BORUNDA, DIRECTOR OF INSTRUCTION AT NEWPORT BEACH COUNTRY CLUB, REVEALS HOW ADDING SPEED TO YOUR SWING CAN ENHANCE YOUR GOLF GAME.

BY ASHLEY RYAN



Stretch thoroughly before and after any practice session, as well as after each round of golf. Resistance bands are useful tools for warming up prior to your speed training sessions.

As a golfer, when you step into the tee box, you likely want to hit the ball hard and far. As you concentrate on every element of your stance—from posture to positioning—it’s important to remember that how hard you swing the club may have just as much impact as how accurate your swing is.

“Increasing your swing speed is an important skill for making the golf ball travel farther,” says Carlo Borunda, the director of instruction at Newport Beach Country Club. This will, of course, set you up for better shots as you play the course, but it will also transform your game in unexpected ways.

The further you are able to hit the ball on

your first swing, the better position you will be in to capitalize on that distance and get a good score for that hole. For most golfers, it sounds like common sense—but sometimes it’s hard to see just how crucial swing speed can be.

Here, Borunda details how you can use swing speed to your advantage on the course.



The step-change drill will teach you how to add movement to your downswing and speed to your full swing.

BAY WINDOW: How can adding more speed to your swing improve your game?

CARLO BORUNDA: With the extra speed, you’ll be able to use your more precise, shorter irons for your approach shots to the green. The closer your golf ball is to the hole, the more potential you have to lower your score. Ultimately, golf becomes an easier game the more accurate you are.

BW: Why is it important to be able to control the speed of your swing?

CB: Controlling the speed or tempo of your golf swing is directly related to your ability to produce consistent, solid contact with the golf ball. Swinging a golf club too quickly often leads to poor balance, mis-hit contact on the club face and inaccurate results. A swing that is under control is especially helpful when you are nervous or under pressure.

BW: Does the weight of your golf club affect your speed?

CB: The weight of your golf club can have a significant impact on your play. A heavy club will limit your ability to create faster swing speeds. A



club that is overly light can provide more speed, but it can also disrupt your tempo and produce inconsistent results. The proper club weight will improve your speed and consistency.

BW: What is the proper posture/grip/stance for an increased swing speed?

CB: An athletic stance with the feet at least shoulder-width apart has the potential to produce faster swing speeds. Legs should be engaged, but not excessively flexed. The correct spine tilt originates at the hips, allowing the hands to hang just beyond the toes. Weight should slightly favor your left side (for right-handed players) at address, with more pressure being applied to the heels. The grip is positioned on the strong side, with the hands angled to the right of the grip's center line. These positions are designed to generate additional speed while keeping the golf club under control.

BW: How does rotation of the body play a role?

CB: The rotation of your body in the swing is critical for enhancing your swing speed. Golf pros on the PGA Tour and LPGA Tour rotate their pelvis up to 45 degrees, while their shoulders rotate approximately 90 degrees as they complete their backswing. At impact, the pelvis will rotate around 30 degrees in the other direction while the shoulders will rotate approximately 20 degrees, allowing the golf club to swing on an efficient plane. As the golfer swings the club through contact and into a full and balanced finish, this rotation provides great momentum and swing speed to the arms and golf club.

BW: Can shallowing the club enhance or hinder your swing speed?

CB: Shallowing the golf club in the downswing can provide a significant amount of increased swing speed, particularly if your swing plane is already too upright. Golfers who attempt to shallow their golf club incorrectly risk the possibility of interacting with the hosel of their golf club at impact, which is one of the most dreadful places to contact a golf ball. The proper way to achieve the ideal swing plane is to improve your hip rotation at impact while allowing your arms and golf club to be pulled through contact.

BW: Which muscles should golfers work to strengthen to ensure they are able to add speed

to their swing?

CB: Improving the strength in your hands is essential when trying to add speed to your golf swing. The faster you move the golf club, the heavier it becomes; therefore, your hands and forearms must be strong enough to hold on to the club. Your legs are another important region where golfers can gain strength if they wish to hit the ball farther. Your legs not only assist you in maintaining balance, but they also supply additional torque to your hips and torso during the downswing. Stronger legs will also enable you to maintain speed later in the round.

BW: Which training aids do you recommend?

CB: SuperSpeed Golf makes my favorite speed training aids. They consist of an oversize grip, a launch monitor and a three-club training system. These tools are used together with ... [the company's] multiweek speed training program, which can be repeated to keep increasing speed. Resistance bands are also excellent tools to use when training for increased swing speed.

BW: Are there any drills or practice techniques golfers can use to increase their speed?

CB: My favorite speed training drills are found in Level 2 of the SuperSpeed program. The step-change drill and the max-out drill are two that I like to use at the driving range and sometimes as a warmup prior to a tee shot on the golf course where distance is essential. Your feet start close together in the step-change drill and, as you swing the club back, you step toward your target with your lead foot and swing as quickly as possible into a balanced finish position. You will feel an increase in momentum as you step, which is a terrific motivator to add some movement to your actual golf swing. The max-out drill consists of swinging as quickly as possible several times in a row. This drill will test your ability to exert as much effort as possible with each swing. One of the primary goals of this and other speed drills is to train the body and mind to recognize that you are capable of swinging at much faster speeds than you would ordinarily feel comfortable. When done correctly and consistently, speed drills are very beneficial, but they do place stress on your body. It is important to prepare for them like you would any other workout by properly warming up beforehand and stretching afterward.



SuperSpeed Golf training aids are excellent tools to use when trying to increase your swing speed.

BW: Anything else to add?

CB: Make sure you are using the best equipment to help you produce your most effective swing. Golfers should seek assistance from their golf coach and/or local club fitter. Each manufacturer offers club fittings at NBCC throughout the year to help our members find the best equipment for their game. During these sessions, the golfer will test several different head designs and shaft options until they find the proper fit. The results are often remarkable—especially if their equipment hasn't been upgraded in the past few years.