

THE MAX GOLF WORKOUT

*A Proven Regimen to
Improve Your Strength,
Flexibility, Endurance, and
Distance off the Tee*

John Little



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THE MAX GOLF WORKOUT

ALSO BY JOHN LITTLE

Advanced Max Contraction Training

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Power Factor Training (with Peter Sisco)

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The Wisdom of Mike Mentzer (with Joanne Sharkey)

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my wife, Terri, and to our children, Riley, Taylor, Brandon, and Benjamin, who encouraged me in the research, experimentation, and development of this protocol. It is also dedicated to my late father, William T. Little, who first introduced me to the game of golf (alas, when I was too young to appreciate it) and to Sally and Gord Sisco, who reintroduced me to the game many decades later. And finally, this book is dedicated to those individuals who value reason and science in their training and do not follow the “herd” mentality that so dominates popular culture.

FOREWORD

When I first walked through the doors of Nautilus North Strength and Fitness Centre in 2004, I was “green” by fitness industry standards to the whole concept of strength training. Although I had read many books on strength training and had played sports and trained with weights for years, I had no way of knowing that there was a “right” way and a “wrong” way of exercising—and that I (and most everyone else) had apparently been misled by the industry into thinking that there were only “different” ways. I worked with John Little from that year to the present and we agreed to test everything—every workout protocol, every recovery interval, every nutritional consideration that we had heard about. As a result, many concepts that were popular were found to be without foundation, and a new direction began to emerge.

We conducted studies on protocols to test training theories on large numbers of people to see what worked, to what degree it worked, and whether or not better results could be obtained. As someone who likes to golf, my interest in how to improve my game was always in the back of my mind. Many of the clients I train are also golfers and are hungry

for knowledge on ways to improve their games as well. What taking part in all of these studies gave was an objective view of the data. Neither I nor my clients cared about the fitness industry, or what was the new hot trend. Instead, we wanted results—the quicker the better—and if that meant we didn't have to be in the gym three to four days a week, that was fine by us as we'd rather be out golfing anyway.

In the first year that I worked for John and Terri Little I personally supervised some 7,500 workouts and our facility oversaw some 25,000 workouts. Indeed, since we kept workout records on all of our clients there was already a considerable database of cause and effect relationships prior to setting out to conduct our more formal studies into the effects of exercise.

One of our first studies involved devising a means to determine an individual's optimal training frequency. For instance, when did the body produce a change in muscle mass and at what point would it begin to lose size after it had been produced? The results were astonishing. The first few days following the workout revealed to us that a trainee is not stronger, but weaker. Indeed, since recovery precedes growth, the data revealed that a trainee is not ready to work out again and would not make any meaningful progress for at least a week after a workout. We also discovered that, despite what the fitness industry has been saying for years, one did not lose what one had gained if one did not work out again within ninety-six hours. With help of the Bod Pod body composition testing machine, we were able to scientifically track what happens to the body in the two weeks after a high intensity workout—this was the first time that such a test had been performed.

Then we wanted to see how much fat could be lost in a ten-week period. Again, this had relevance to the game of golf as muscle is what contracts (not fat) and it is muscular contraction that moves the clubs. However, we had seen that the fitness industry belief was that you had to spend multiple hours over multiple days per week in order to lose body fat. Was this true? Or was there a better, simpler way? These were questions we wanted answers for when we conducted our second study. The answers to these questions will surprise you and are laid out in this book. The combined time of all ten workouts is less than what most personal trainers would have you go through in your first session. This study not only will change how people look at fat loss but it also spoke to how little training is actually required to accomplish it.

By reading this book and following the training guidelines you will become a stronger athlete, and a stronger athlete is a better athlete. Will it bring you up to the upper levels of the PGA? Probably not, but it will certainly allow you to better your own game and allow you to chase that little white ball much longer and to hit it a hell of a lot farther—without living your life in the gym.

—**Cary Howe**

*Lead trainer, Nautilus North Strength & Fitness Centre
Bracebridge, Ontario*

INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS A NEW PERSPECTIVE

To begin, it should be pointed out that this is not a golf book. It will not at any point speak of how to grip a club, how to position your feet, the arc of the swing, graphite clubs, or the “inner game” of golf. It is assumed that the reader already has some knowledge of these facets of the game, and presently is looking for a means of improving his overall strength and fitness levels so as to be able to improve upon his ability to play the game of golf more efficiently and with greater power.

However, this is not merely a compendium of workout routines. Instead, within these pages you will learn of a revolutionary new perspective on strength training. It is so revolutionary (at least compared to what is being typically served up as strength training for golfers) that you will need to open your mind to new facts and, surprising as this may sound, common sense. To help the reader cultivate the correct mindset for learning, I have reworked a short Zen parable.

A golfer once learned that a new training protocol had been developed that had produced fast and startling improvement in one's golf game. As the innovator of this protocol lived in semi-seclusion in a

northern town, he decided he would make the trip to speak with him. The innovator received the golfer graciously and invited him out onto his deck on a beautiful summer day to answer his questions.

“Tell me about this system of yours,” began the golfer. As the innovator began to explain, he was frequently interrupted by the golfer: “Oh, yes, in the gym where I work out, my personal trainer has me do something like that,” and “it sounds interesting in theory but nobody I know trains that way.” After several fruitless attempts to explain himself uninterrupted, the innovator finally suggested that they have a cup of coffee. The golfer agreed. The innovator went into his home and came out with a pot of coffee and two cups. He poured his own and then began to fill the golfer’s cup. As the golfer continued to talk about the traditions and methods of the sports greatest champions, the innovator kept filling his cup until it began to overflow. “What are you doing?” asked the golfer incredulously. “Can’t you see that the cup is full?” “Precisely,” answered the innovator. “Like this cup, you are so full of your own preconceptions, opinions and traditions, that there is no more room in your mind for what I have to say. Unless you first empty your cup, how will you ever taste my cup of coffee?” The golfer got the point.

I would ask that you, like the golfer, first “empty your cup” of all preconceived notions, opinions, and traditions on the subject of how to train for the game of golf so that you will have room—intellectually—for what I am about to relate.

Anatomists tell us that more than four hundred muscles are responsible for allowing us to go about our daily activities. It’s also common knowledge that if we don’t make an effort to use them to 100 percent of their energy potential, they’ll slowly wither away with the passage of time. Ironically, while all of us possess the same number of muscles, not all of us possess the same number of muscle fibers in each of our muscle groups. This explains why few of us can ever develop our muscles (not that many of us wish to) to the same size as champion bodybuilders. Let it be understood that the champions of any sport—whether of yesteryear, today, and, for that matter, tomorrow possessed one quality that the vast majority of us do not—uncommon genetics. The strongest and most muscular among them had long muscle bellies, greater muscle fiber density, greater than average bone thickness, and higher than normal metabolisms. However, while only a certain portion of the population can develop a heavy musculature, everyone can improve

their strength and the size of their muscles to a considerable degree, along with dramatically improving their performance in the game of golf—if they train intelligently, scientifically, and realistically.

For years golfers seeking to become stronger have known that weight training is the key. However, how to best employ weights in developing maximum strength and realizing one's full muscular potential has been a rather foggy area at best. This book is an attempt to bring some much-needed science into the arena of strength training with the specific goal of improving one's golf game. For decades there has been the belief that if one merely aped a particular golfing champion's training method, then one could dramatically improve one's game—a belief that has been found to be completely erroneous.

This is not to suggest that there isn't a way to improve such aspects of the game as the power of your drive, better control of your irons, and improved precision in putting. There is. However, it has little or nothing to do with such things as stretching, mental concentration exercises



It is time for golfers to take a fresh, unobstructed look at what their actual training requirements should be.

(for wishing will not make it so), or going to the gym three to four days a week to increase one's strength and muscular endurance. For too long, training for the game of golf has been left to the domain of uninformed personal trainers who seek nothing other than more billable hours, coaching folklore that has little scientific basis, and the subtle blandishments of the commercial interests that have infiltrated all sports and, indeed, all endeavors in which peak performance is a value. Science has been all but shut out because reality is often less alluring than fantasy.

Taking quite a different approach, this book is based upon three simple touchstones:

1. Research.
2. Research.
3. More research.

You will not find a word of advice within these pages that is not supported by scientific study. This book's conclusions and recommendations will, therefore, be refreshing to some (who enjoy new discoveries that can be validated empirically) and upsetting to others (particularly those with commercial ties to certain aspects of the fitness and golfing industry), while at the same time providing ample intellectual ammunition for those who sensed that something was amiss with the training advice they have been receiving, but had lacked the data necessary to counter such claims with any type of authority.

For over ten years I have helped golfers improve their strength and their game, but more importantly, I've continued to study human physiology and the role of strength training in helping people to optimize their potential and have continued to experiment and refine what I've learned. This book is the result.

The information contained within its pages will make you considerably stronger, fitter, and will dramatically improve your game of golf in the quickest, most efficient manner presently known by science. And it will further serve as a fact-checking guide for those who truly seek to obtain the most (or Max) from their bodies and from the game that they love so much.

—John Little

CONTENTS

Foreword ix

Introduction: Towards a New Perspective xiii

PART ONE: THE DATA

Chapter 1: Where are All the Tigers? 3

Chapter 2: A Stronger Golfer Is a Better Golfer 7

Chapter 3: A Revolutionary Study—And Its Implications 13

Chapter 4: A Second Revolutionary Study—The Once a Week Workout 19

The Nautilus North Study • Enter the Body Comp Weight Analysis Center • The Stimulus • A New Observation: Muscular Suppression • No Decompensation in Forty-Eight to Ninety-Six Hours

PART TWO: THE METHOD

Chapter 5: Understanding the Process 43

Chapter 6: The MAX GOLF Workout 51

Tim Peake Workout • Non-Nautilus Max Contraction Workout

Chapter 7: Tips for More Productive Workouts 77

Longer Time of Contraction (TOC) for Beginners • Keep Accurate Records • Proceed Cautiously • Training partners • Understand the Nature of High Energy Exercise • Allow Sufficient Time for Adequate Recovery and Growth to Take Place • Strive to Increase the Intensity

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Chapter 8: Advanced Training | 83 |
| Max Strap Pulldowns • Leg Extensions • Leg Curls | |

PART THREE: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Chapter 9: What About Stretching? | 95 |
| Stretching Does Not Warm Up Muscles • Stretching Does Not Prevent Injuries • Stretching Does Not Make You More Flexible • Stretching Does Not Help You Recover from an Injury More Quickly • Stretching Does Not Make You Stronger | |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapter 10: Max Nutrition for Peak Performance and Weight Control | 103 |
| A Rational Approach to Fat Loss • Diets and Why They Work • What Is Overweight? • Body Composition • Diet for the Golfer | |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapter 11: Senior Benefits | 125 |
| Actually Reversing Aging • The Anti-Aging Prescription | |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Chapter 12: Questions and Answers | 131 |
|--|------------|

| | |
|----------------|------------|
| <i>Sources</i> | <i>167</i> |
|----------------|------------|

| | |
|------------------------|------------|
| <i>Acknowledgments</i> | <i>169</i> |
|------------------------|------------|

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| <i>About the Author</i> | <i>171</i> |
|-------------------------|------------|

PART ONE:

THE DATA

