

THE GOLFERS

# CORE ASSESSMENT

3 SIMPLE TESTS TO TELL IF YOUR CORE IS STRONG, STABLE AND ABLE TO COPE WITH THE DEMANDS OF THE SWING

A strong and stable core improves everything; mobility, stability, spinal health, power transfer and clubhead speed.

**The primary role of the core in the golf swing is to transfer the force from the ground up to the arms, the club and ultimately the ball.**



Unfortunately, the converse is also true. If your core is weak, imbalanced or immobile, your performance will suffer.

In this guide you'll see 3 simple tests that will help you gauge how well your core is performing.

What follows is not a comprehensive assessment - for that you'll want to consult a movement specialist (I personally do online consults and in-person in the London area). That said, these self-tests are a great starting point for training your core for better performance.

# TEST 1: GOLF POSTURE PELVIC TILT

The pelvic tilt test is a great test of your ability to control your pelvis position, this is vital to your ability to transfer power between your lower and upper body in the golf swing.

Begin by getting into a normal 5 iron golf posture and observe whether your low back has an accentuated arch (anterior pelvic tilt), a flat or slightly arched position (neutral pelvic tilt) or is rounded (posterior pelvic tilt).

Once your static postural position has been established, tilt the pelvis anteriorly or forward, thus increasing the arch of the low back.

Next, tilt the pelvis posteriorly or backward to remove the arch in the lumbar spine.

When tilting the pelvis observe the amount of motion in both directions as you will often see limitations one way or the other.

Also observe the smoothness of the movement, if there is a lot of shaking accompanied with the movement this is indicative of not using these muscles in day to day life, or the golf swing, and a weakness in those muscles.



Many people will find themselves starting in anterior pelvic tilt and limited moving further into anterior pelvic tilt as a result. They will also display weakness (shaking) moving into posterior pelvic tilt.

Anterior pelvic in itself is not necessarily a bad thing, but it can be problematic, especially if it's excessive, or coupled with a limitation or weakness moving into posterior pelvic tilt. Excessive low back extension coupled with a high number of spinal rotations is probably the biggest cause of back pain amongst golfers, whilst posterior pelvic tilt is essential to properly transfer power in the downswing.

**If this is you, you're going to want to start by performing moves that help lift the pelvis, lower the sternum and ribcage and restore the core to proper position.**

## TEST 2: BIRD-DOG

The bird-dog looks at rotary stability of the pelvis, core and shoulder girdle during a combined upper and lower extremity movement. This pattern is complex, requiring proper neuromuscular coordination and energy transfer through the torso.

To perform the test get into a quadruped position and simply extend your left leg out behind you and your right arm out in front of you simultaneously. Repeat for 3 reps before switching sides to extend the right leg and left arm for 3 further reps.



There are two major things to observe. Firstly, the spinal position in quadruped should be maintained as the arms and legs are extended, you should not see the lumbar curve deepen or the torso rise up.



Secondly, the hips should stay level and you should not see any lateral movement of the hips when completing the test.



**If you have excessive lumbar arch or the torso rise you're going to want to prioritise core exercises that work the anterior core.**

**If your hips rotate or move laterally you'll want to prioritise anti-rotation and anti-lateral flexion core exercises.**

# TEST 3: SINGLE-LEG GLUTE BRIDGE

The single-leg glute bridge is a great test of stability in the pelvis, lumbar spine and core. By now (hopefully) I don't have to tell golfers how important the glutes are to stability and power generation in the golf swing.

This test will highlight any inhibition or weakness in the glutes due to over-recruitment of synergistic muscles such as the low back or hamstrings.

Start with back flat on the floor, knees bent, feet flat on the floor, knees and feet together and arms extended out over the chest. Have them hold this position for ten seconds.



It indicates an instability/weakness in the glute on the left side if the pelvis on the right side drops. If you feel this in the left hamstring or lower back rather than the glute or the hamstring/ low back start to cramp this indicates inhibition of the glute and recruitment of the synergistic muscles.

Repeat the test on the right side with instability/ weakness in the glute on the right side if the pelvis on the right side drops and inhibition of the glute if you feel this in the right hamstring or lower back rather than the glute or the hamstring/ low back start to cramp.

**If this is you, you're going to want to include some glute activation work daily and strengthen the glutes in the gym with deadlift variations and hip thrusts.**

These tests and the exercise suggestions based on them are a great starting point for greater core strength and ultimately better health and performance on the golf course.

## **Want More?**

For a full assessment of your core stability, mobility, movement capabilities, rotational mechanics, force output, etc, and a personalised program to fix the issues identified please visit our personal training page or email [nick@strongergolf.co.uk](mailto:nick@strongergolf.co.uk)