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# Your Junior Golf Fitness Questions ANSWERED

By Mike Hansen, Hansen Fitness for Golf

## 1. What is the number one thing you work on with your juniors and why?

We have adopted the belief of experts who have proven sensitive periods or critical times in every child's life where certain skills can be learned at an accelerated rate. These critical times are called windows of opportunity that as a coach, we would not want to miss.

**With 8-11 year olds** - we focus on their fundamental movement skills like skipping, hopping, shuffling and foot coordination. This is very important in their development and will seamlessly transfer over to their golf swing.

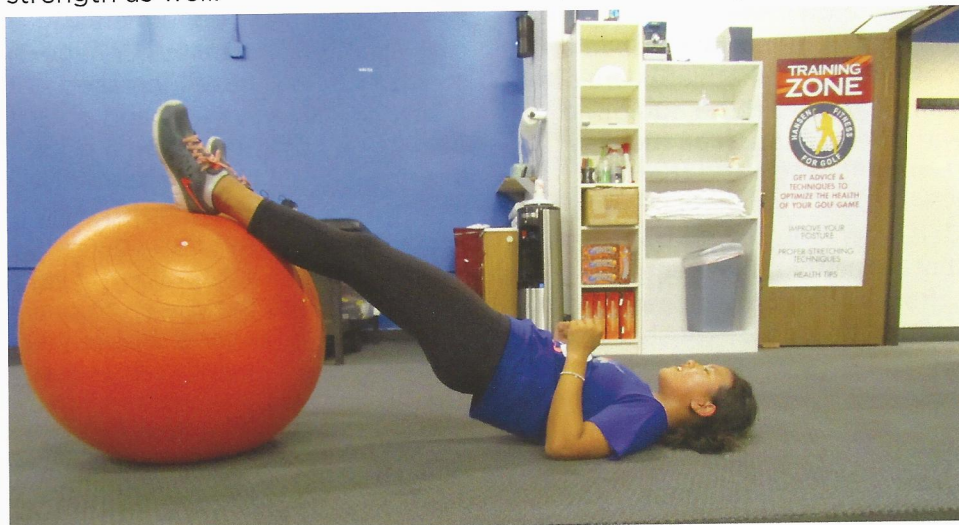
**With 12-14 year olds** - we focus primarily on speed. Speed developments in the linear path as well as rotational speed are both addressed. Multiple studies have shown that speed development in this window is imperative; in fact it is documented that if the young athlete does not develop speed before puberty they will never have that opportunity again. In other words a 25 year old that was very active in this phase and trying to get more speed in their swing will gain much more than that of a golfer that was sedentary during this phase. During this window, we begin to introduce functional strength as well.



Junior performance program at Dove Canyon G.C., working on fast feet in the ladder for speed and coordination drills.

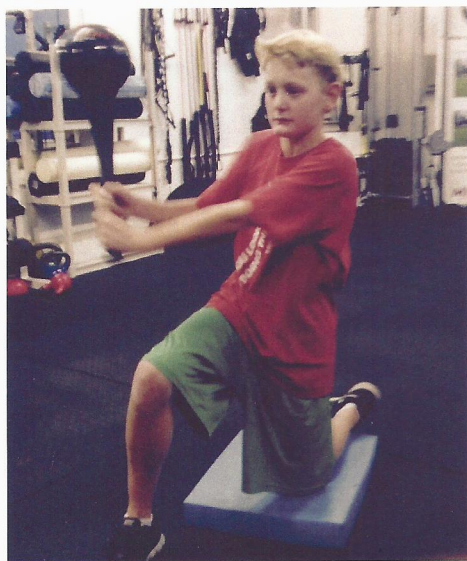
**With 15-16 year olds** - our main focus is suppleness (flexibility). This is usually the age that puberty sets in and growth spurts are seen. Maintaining and increasing flexibility during this phase is a must for young golfers. Many players may experience problems with their swings because their bodies are growing fast and they become tight. This window is crucial in order to help juniors excel in their long term athletic and golf development.

**In the 17+ window** - our primary focus is strength. We base our program on how fundamentally sound their body is and how much athletic development they were involved in during the previous phases. During this phase we concentrate on strength, speed, and power development. We



Bridge on stability ball- This exercise is very important to strengthen the glutes and hamstrings. The backside (posterior chain) is often overlooked in many programs, but is the most active muscle group for lower body stability in the swing.





Half Kneeling RMT Club rotations. RMT Club, a piece of equipment with weight in the head of the club, focuses on core strength, lower body stability and forearm strength.

like to introduce Olympic lifting techniques, explosive plyometrics, and functional movement exercise, all which transfer to the proper body sequencing of the swing.

## 2. What is the number one reason juniors seek your help?

The most common answer we hear when we discuss goals with our juniors is more distance, with a close second being more stamina for multiple day tournaments.

Distance is very dependent on where they are in their development. We may be able to increase distance by working on flexibility with some or strength and speed with others. This is determined by the initial



Band Rotations - rotational exercise working the entire body from the ground up. Use different angles of resistance to target multiple muscle groups.

assessment we do with all our clients.

Stamina can be increased by working on leg strength or by simply adding interval training into their program in which we increase their heart rate to around 80% of their max and then let it recover. Interval training is very similar to a golf tournament in which their heart rate is always fluctuating.

## 3. What is the mission of Hansen Fitness for Golf?

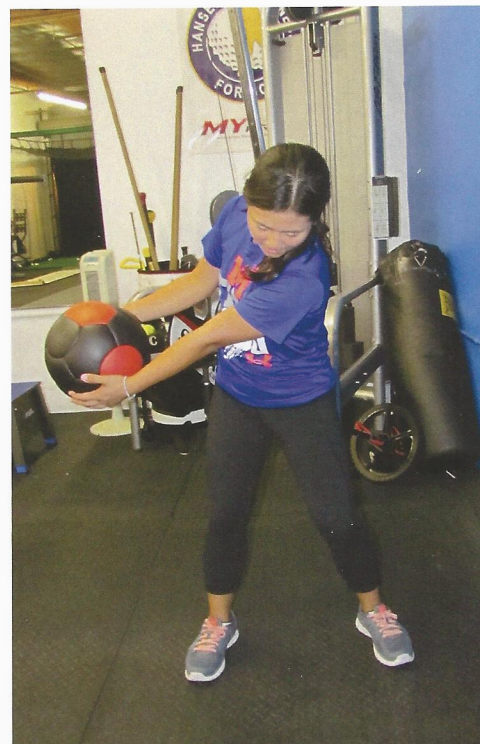
The mission of our junior program is to educate juniors on the importance of a well-rounded exercise and nutrition program for optimal development and performance in their golf game with the expectations it will continue well into their adult life. We do this in a fun and safe atmosphere by utilizing research based programs and years of experience to provide world class results.

## 4. Tell us a little about TPI and their role in education and their influence on your business?

TPI's junior certification program is above and beyond any junior golf program out there. Their philosophy is to create the athlete first and then turn that athlete into an amazing golfer. They have established an advisory board of experts from around the world specializing in pediatric orthopedics, athletic development, swing fundamentals, nutrition, and exercise. They have spent years developing and perfecting their program with young golfers from all walks of life from all over the world.

TPI's program is a full golf development program teaching all aspects of the game. We have adopted the performance and fitness portion of their program, allowing our students to continue to work with their swing coaches. We currently work with our juniors individually and in groups. We have also had the opportunity to enhance already established local junior programs.

When I started my golf specific fitness company in 2005, it was difficult to spread the word of



Wall throws using weighted medicine balls, helping increase clubhead speed, core strength and lower body stability.

fitness in golf. In 2006 TPI started their show on the Golf Channel, it influenced my business immensely by reaching a larger audience. The concept is much more accepted and clients both young and old are seeing and feeling the benefits every day.

## 5. What is one piece of advice you can give parents of young golfers?

Let your youngster play multiple sports! Too often we see a 14 or 15 year old come in that started golf at 4 or 5 and hasn't played any other sports. With these juniors we have to spend time getting rid of imbalances and limitations caused by the repetitive one sided movement. We do not advise early specialization, 13 or 14 is the perfect age to decide to focus on one sport. Golfers who play other sports already have great control of their bodies and are quick learners when it comes to developing speed and power conducive to their golf swing. Multiple sports allow juniors to be well balanced physically and have symmetrical strengths on both sides of their bodies. Being aware of this will allow your junior to enjoy golf more, and prevent injury for the future.