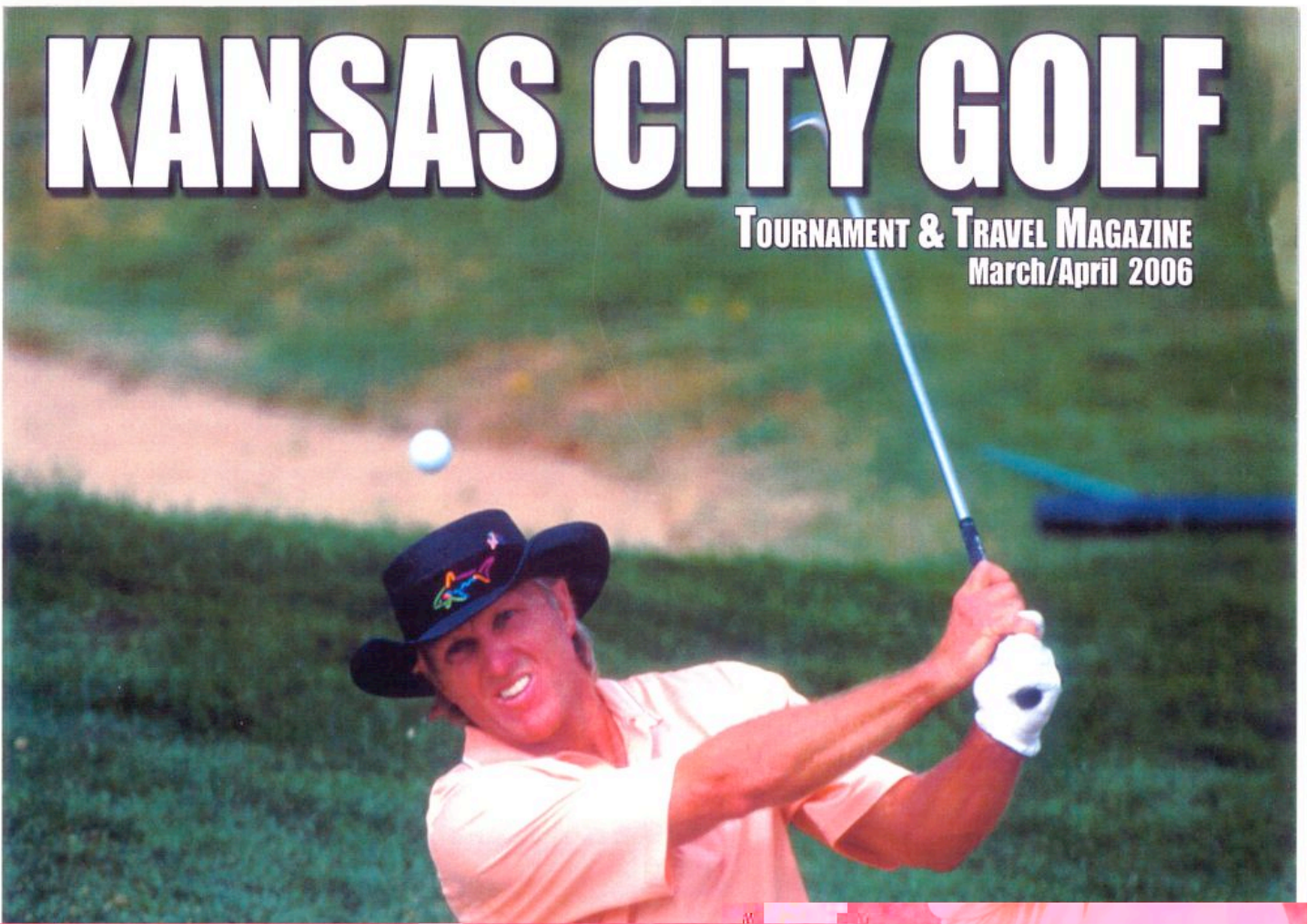


# KANSAS CITY GOLF

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**U.S. Senior Open Championship at Prairie Dunes Country Club**

# Keep Your Head Down

By Dr. Lynn McIntosh

**"KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN!"** How many times have you heard those words right before attempting to execute an effective and efficient swing of the golf club? Too often, that message translates into an expectation that the head is to be kept still. Not so! In fact, it is not possible! Concentrating on pressing the chin down toward the chest in an attempt to immobilize your head severely limits the strength and accuracy of your stroke.



The head is attached to the body. It must rotate in a natural fashion to maximize the thrust and strength of the swing. Rotating the head naturally, even ever so slightly, is directly related to the rotation of the hips, which allows the body to shift weight from side to side. During the

execution of a regular swing, the chin must move up and away from the chest, slightly to the right, to allow the left shoulder to make the turn of a natural, healthy swing. (For those who golf left-handed, the movement of the chin is to the left, freeing the right shoulder for adequate motion.)

It is possible, and desirable, to continue to fix your eyes on the ball while your head moves with your body. The key is to fix your eyes on the ball until the club head collides with it. Even as your head moves slightly, your chin raises, and your shoulders and hips swivel, it is possible to maintain this fixed eye position. As soon as your club head impacts the ball, your head should begin to turn naturally toward your target.

The head does remain in a more fixed position while putting. Annika Sorenstam, the best female golfer in the world, recommends this practice tip. Place a penny under the ball. Even after your putter comes in contact with the ball, keep your eyes fixed on the penny until you hear your ball dropping into the cup. While putting, anticipating the movement of your head will effect the direction of your putt. Move your head only after the activity is complete.

If you feel that your head is moving too much during the execution of your regular swing, it may be indicative of another problem – poor posture.

Think of your posture as vertical alignment. Imagine your body from feet to head, as a tower of stacking blocks. Each block must be accurately aligned and balanced on the block below to insure balance from bottom to top. *Static* posture is this position, from which each movement of the body begins and ends. *Dynamic* posture is the ability to rotate around the axis of alignment. In the example of the stacking blocks, dynamic posture would be the rotation of individual blocks while maintaining the static

posture of the entire vertically aligned structure. Dynamic posture does not imply sway. Once again – imagine the stacking blocks. Sway would be the result of cumulative imbalance. Dynamic posture begins with static posture. The lower body remains steady, allowing the upper body to rotate naturally and efficiently.

One of the most common posture problems is anterior positioning of the head. For many, the head protrudes forward from the vertical alignment of the body, creating strain on the neck and shoulders and limited rotation of the neck and chin. Anterior head position is easy to recognize. It is the “push” in the walk of someone whose head precedes his or her body. It is the strain in the neck or the headache of tension. One simple exercise, even possible to execute repeatedly in your car, can help remedy anterior position of the head. This exercise is one of posterior translation, eventually moving the position of the head from protruding forward to accurate balance over the shoulders and neck.


While sitting in the car and facing forward, slide the chin back along an imagined plane horizontal to the plane of your shoulders. Press the back of your head into the headrest of your car and hold for 3-5 seconds. Relax. Repeat. Be sure to s-l-i-d-e your head back. Do not tip your chin or raise your forehead. Repeat this sliding and holding as often as possible, applying resistance to the headrest each time. This repeated exercise strengthens the neck and moves the head back, placing it in a position more closely aligned in a healthy posture.

Correct body alignment, healthy static and dynamic posture, and exercise will all serve to help you develop a more fluid movement of your shoulders, neck, chin and head. A professional evaluation of your body posture is easily available from your chiropractic professional, often free of charge. Your chiropractor is trained to assess your needs and design treatment to attain your designed results.

Relax! Feel the freedom of healthy body posture and enjoy the improvement in your game!

*Health Segment brought to you by:*

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