

MIKI'S THREE POWER KEYS

How top UAE amateur Miki Mirza used kettlebell training to find more power, flexibility and balance in his swing

I'VE BEEN WORKING WITH TOP UAE amateur Miki Mirza since October last year, four months before he qualified to play in the Dubai Desert Classic. Miki is a terrific player but when he came to me he had certain physical limitations that were impeding his ability to make a balanced, powerful golf swing. A lack of flexibility, stability and a tightness in his lower body, particularly his hamstrings, was preventing Miki from making the moves he wanted to in his swing.

Over the course of the past eight months, we have been focusing on kettlebell lifting, and already Miki has seen some dramatic results. Highlighted here are three of the most effective exercises we have been working on to improve Miki's flexibility, explosive power and core stability.

PETER SULLIVAN

Peter is a fitness trainer for Spring Dubai who has worked with several accomplished amateur golfers based out of Emirates Golf Club. Contact him on peter@springdubai.com for more info on personal training



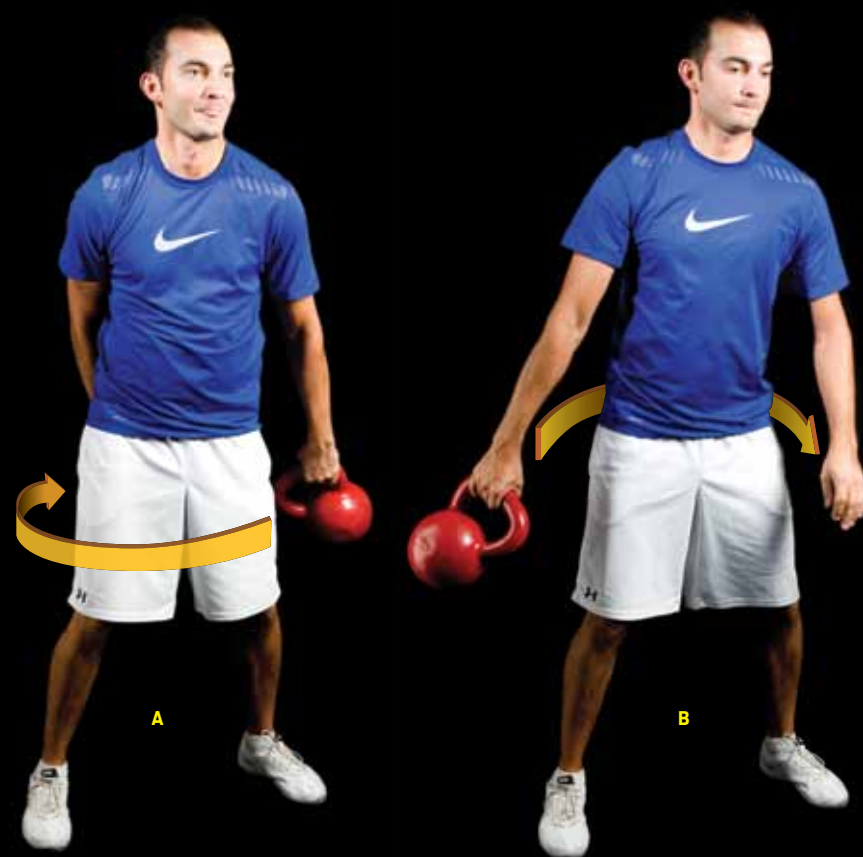
PLAYER PROFILE: MIKI MIRZA

Since Miki began training with Peter Sullivan around nine months ago, he has seen dramatic improvements in his game. His handicap has reached +3, he was the amateur qualifier for the Dubai Desert Classic and topped the '09/'10 EGF Order of Merit table for the first time. He also won his third Dubai Creek Club Championship in a personal best season. Miki attributes much of this success to his kettlebell workouts and flexibility training.

"My flexibility and strength has improved dramatically through the kettlebell workouts, to the extent that I am now 20 yards longer off the tee," says Miki. "Right now I work out twice a week in the group kettlebell classes at Emirates Golf Club, which are challenging and very intense. The increase in distance is down to a combination of my power training and the work I have done with my coach, Stephen Hubner. The kettlebell workouts have allowed me to adapt quicker to the positions Stephen is trying to get me into in the swing, but my clubhead speed has also increased."

1 AROUND THE BODY PASS

This is a great exercise to improve your weight shift and resistance to the rotational force created in your golf swing. Starting with a 25kg kettlebell at hip height, Miki passes the weight around his body, first in one direction then the other. As he picks up speed, the momentum of the kettlebell forces his body to rotate, tightening the muscles in his abs and butt, while keeping the shoulders and hips facing forward. This is a great exercise for developing shoulder and hip turn torque, helping you to feel grounded during your swing. You can do this with a dumbbell if you don't have a kettlebell to hand.



2 FIGURE OF EIGHT

Miki has suffered from tight hamstrings in the past which has restricted his ability to make a big turn and efficient weight shift. This Figure of Eight pass, while similar to the pass around his body, really helps Miki hold a good posture as he stretches his hamstrings. Placing the kettlebell in front of his right foot, Miki

bends his knees and pushes his butt back while keeping his chest up and his back flat. He then passes the kettlebell through and around his legs in a figure of eight loop. This is a great exercise for hip and leg flexibility. When you practice it, make sure you feel the weight shift from left to right, and vice versa.



3 SNATCH STAGE

One of Miki's main goals when he came to me was to find more distance, and one of the best ways to do that is by practicing this explosive power lift. When done correctly, the kettlebell snatch uses momentum generated from the legs and a 'punching' of the hips to drive the weight upwards. Miki grips the kettlebell between his feet, bending his knees and pushing his butt back. The hips initiate the lift, and as the weight passes his shoulders he punches his hand through the handle. This closely mirrors the kind of transitional explosive power that long hitters in golf are known for.

