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Don't Get Cross With Us

A two-part series on Upper and Lower Cross Syndromes and how to correct them

By Julie Sopchak and Anup Sharma

Our next newsletter topic is so involved that we're going to split it up into two parts so we can give you the most organized and complete set of information that we possibly can. This month, we are going to focus on something called **Upper Cross Syndrome (UCS)** and next month, we'll cover **Lower Cross Syndrome (LCS)**.

First off, when we talk about these cross syndromes, we're talking about imbalances between muscles that are **too tight and overactive** against muscles that are **too overstretched and weak**.

When we put ourselves in a particular position for an extended period of time, like say, sitting at a desk hunched over a computer or constantly staring down at our phones, our muscles and joints get "set in their ways." Some muscles get really tight and pull on your bones and joints, while other muscles get too weak and cannot resist this pulling. Being stuck in these positions is a heavy culprit when we have neck and lower back aches.

But that's a real down-and-dirty explanation to get you primed for the nitty-gritty. So let's talk more about UCS and how to correct these imbalances.

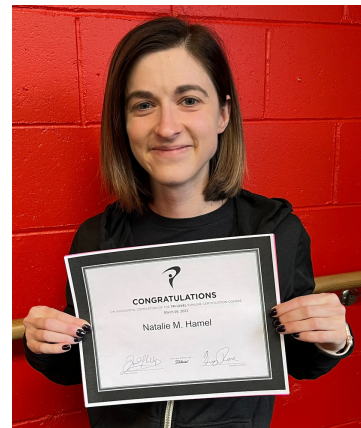
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Find the missing links in your golf game

Congratulations to Strength Coach Natalie on achieving her TPI certification! Titleist Performance Institute is a highly respected certification in the golf industry and with this, Natalie is excited to see how she can help our clients round out their game from hitting that 300-yard drive, to the perfect chip, and sinking those 20-foot putts with ease.

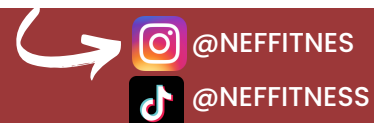
A free informational seminar will be held Sunday April 2 at 9:30 am for anyone interested in learning about Natalie's upcoming TPI Golf Fitness class. The class itself will run Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings for six weeks. The class series will begin with a group assessment and progress into mobility and strength specifically for golf.

For more information, email Coach Natalie at Natalie.Hamel@neffitness.com.



NOT A TYPO

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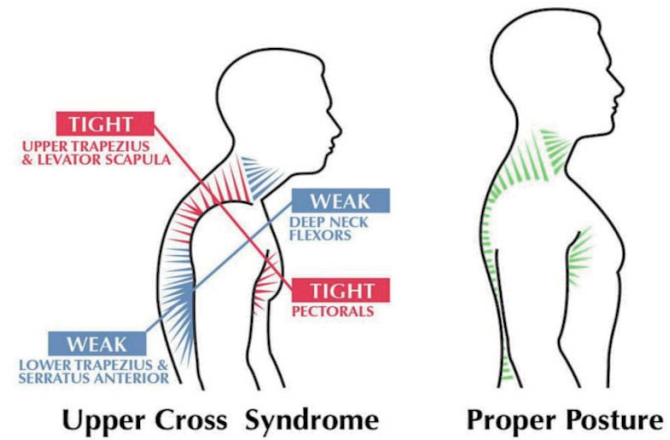


Upper Cross Syndrome

Individuals with UCS will often present with neck pain, a feeling of a heavy head, and a hunched over posture with rounded/protracted shoulders (see image to the right). There are two sets of tight and weak muscles at play, creating that "X" pattern you see in the image. Let's try to break it down a little bit and understand exactly what we're looking at.

Pecs vs Upper Trapezius

The **over-tight** Pectoralis Major/Minor pull the shoulder blades forward while the **over-weak** mid/low Trapezius are unable to counter this to pull the shoulders back to neutral. Now the shoulders are hanging forward, creating that hunchback posture and putting some unwanted stress on that thoracic spine.



Upper Trapezius vs Deep Neck Flexors (DNFs)

Next, your **over-tight** upper Trapezius and Levator Scapulae make your shoulders shrug up and pull down on the base of your skull, kind of like if you were looking up at the sky (cervical extension), while your **over-weak** DNFs are unable to pull the head back over the shoulders, so now your head kinda hangs forward and puts all that stress on your neck as a result.

"Cool thanks, that's really good to know, but how am I supposed to fix all this?"

Your coaches will strategically employ exercises that will *loosen* the tight muscles and *strengthen* the weaker ones (there are many). Be advised, however, that having arthritis in these areas may inhibit corrective measures. With that in mind, continuing to perform prescriptive exercises will prevent UCS from getting worse by increasing postural awareness.



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SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHT



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NEFF clients Anne and Mike Chernick run their law firm out of Springfield, MA and have built a practice specializing in motor vehicle accidents, personal injury, worker's compensation, estate planning, wills and trusts, power of attorney, and probates of estate.

For more information about the Chernicks' law firm, visit www.chernicklawfirm.com.

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