



# The Flex Complex

La Costa's Roger Fredericks focuses on the body first to help golfers improve their games

By Katie Denbo

He was an aspiring professional golfer fresh out of Arizona State University, with — like many talented players at age 22 — his eye on PGA Tour School. Until he fell and shattered his wrist, along with his dream of playing professionally.

Or so he thought.

Roger Fredericks' road to recovery didn't really begin until nearly 11 years later, but the now-56-year-old golf flexibility mastermind is as healthy as he's ever been. Although he's not playing professionally, he is helping people such as Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus, and friend (and investor) Arnold Palmer, along with some less-famous golfers, get their younger bodies back as well.

"There's no one right way to swing a golf club; if you look at the players on Tour, there's a huge variety of swings out there," says Fredericks, whose golf instruction and flexibility programs are located at La Costa Resort in Carlsbad. "What all these players do have in common, though, is strong legs and upper-body flexibility, which is what the golf swing demands. The secret is educating players about their bodies—if you explain why they do what they do, they just get it."

Before Fredericks discovered the "secret," however, rewind 48 years to when he first picked up a golf club at age 8 at his family's home course, La Cumbre CC in Santa Barbara. "The first year of my golf life I just kind of gripped it and ripped it," he remembers. "One day, in the fourth fairway at La Cumbre, my father gave me a swing tip, and I was absolutely addicted. I turned into a golf swing junkie."

Fredericks' addiction led to nearly 20 junior golf titles, beginning with the L.A. City Junior title in 1962 and leading up to the Southern California Pro-Junior Championship five years later at Antelope Valley CC where partner (and legend) Eddie Merrins ("my father away from home," Fredericks says), birdied a four-foot putt for the victory. Fredericks' golf team at Palisades High School — one of the top schools in the country at the time and home of a long line of accomplished golfers that includes Amy Alcott — won 74 of 75 tournaments. It secured him a golf scholarship to powerhouse Arizona State, along with the likes of Tour players Bob Gilder and Tom Purtzer.

His injury after his final season, which included two wrist surgeries culminating in an artificial bone implant, saw his scratch index climb up to a 9 handicap. Along with two knee surgeries later on, he underwent several ineffective attempts at "every type of therapy you can think of, from traditional to acupuncture, and my body was continuing to get worse." A chance encounter with former San Diego Chargers head trainer Ric McDonald literally changed his life.

"Ric took one look at me and I was enlightened," Fredericks says. "He pointed out my posture and he said, 'wow, you must really have a sore ankle.' That was just the beginning of my journey with him."

Fredericks then saw what was wrong with his golf game: "I had never looked at the degeneration of my body and that the problem with my game was not my swing, but my body," he explains. "This is especially important for older golfers to realize, and with proper flexibility training the results can be life-

Among Roger Fredericks' list of accomplished golf clientele is Arnold Palmer (right), who came to Fredericks wanting to hit the ball longer.



