



# 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."

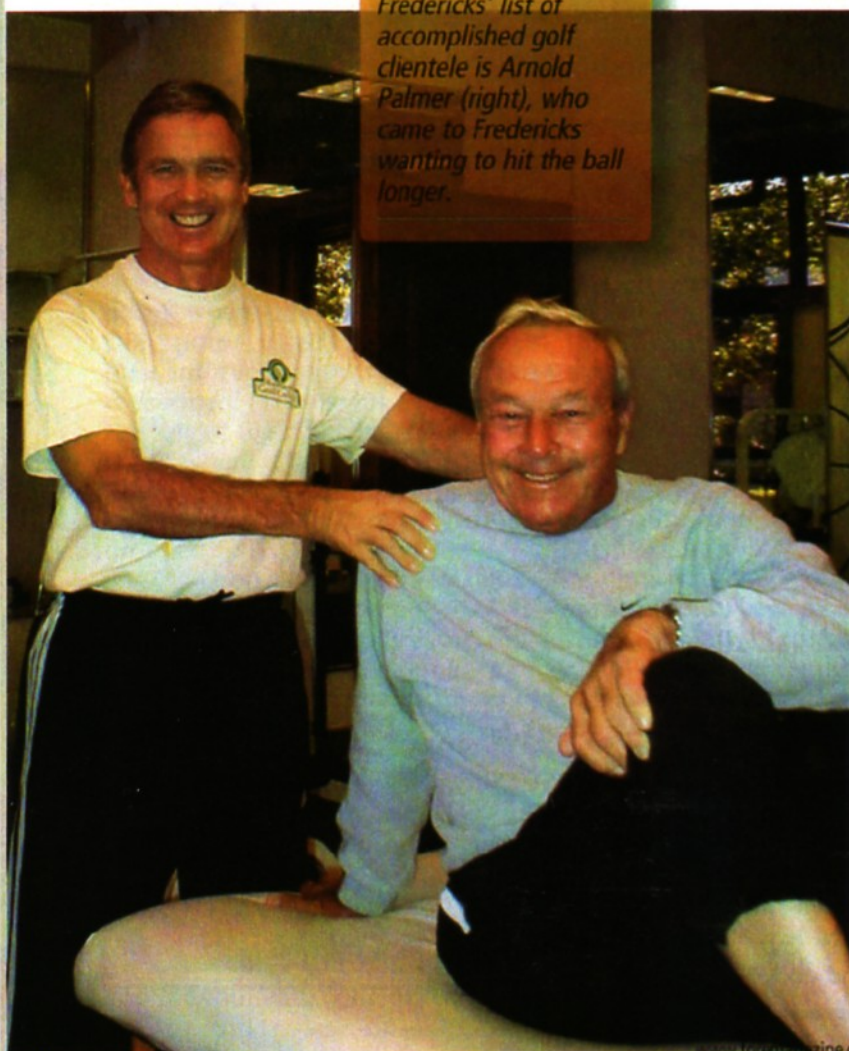
Fredericks' addiction led to nearly 20 junior golf titles, beginning with the L.A. City Junior title in 1962 and leading up to the Southern California Pro-Junior Championship five years later at Antelope Valley CC where partner (and legend) Eddie Merrins ("my father away from home," Fredericks says), 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.







*Through training in flexibility, Fredericks now says that at age 56, he's in the best shape of his life.*

changing."

That initiated Fredericks' quest to spread the word of what he had learned: that flexibility is the foundation of not just golf, but all daily activities. As he physically made gains and surpassed his level of fitness before his accident, his handicap spiraled back down in a matter of months. Together, Fredericks and McDonald later became protégés of Peter Egoscue, Jack Nicklaus' trainer. It would be the beginning of a career that continues to see Fredericks as one of the most coveted golf flexibility professionals in the world.

"The sedentary lifestyle people have become accustomed to is a huge problem," Fredericks says, "and because of normal, daily routines, almost everyone is out of posture. Sitting in the car or behind a desk, slouching, virtually everything is aiding bad habits that hinder flexibility. People should always start with flexibility before any other conditioning regimen."

A nearly 30-year career teaching golf and flexibility evolved from working with Kip Puterbaugh in the 1980s, opening Del Mar Golf College in 1991 and, after connecting with many senior Tour players while running his golf school in Hawaii for nine years, starting the Golf Academy at Mission Hills in 2002 with Tommy Jacobs and relocating to his current home base of La Costa in 2004. Along the way, he's mentored six Hall of Fame golfers and over 50 senior Tour players. One of those players is Palmer, who came to Fredericks at age 74 wanting to hit the ball farther. He's been a frequent client since.

Fredericks runs three programs at La Costa: Golf Introduction, Golf Flexibility, and the most comprehensive program, Golf Swing Analysis and Flexibility. In this program, he spends nearly three hours with students of all skill levels in different aspects of the game. "I videotape, work on the golf swing for an hour, then take players up for a flexibility test in the athletic club," he says. "I then put them on their own custom flexibility program. At least 70 or 80 percent of golfers I talk to say they stretch, but the truth is, very few of them are flexible. I think this is because most people are stretching incorrectly, which is why they're not getting acceptable results."

Fredericks also wanted to reach more people with a new instructional video he had put out in 2005. The answer? An infomercial broadcast worldwide, including on The Golf Channel, in which Palmer (who also appeared in the taping) and six others invested and pushed sales of his *Secrets to Golf Swing Flexibility* to the top. "We've been the best-selling golf DVD collection in the country for two years now," he says. He's also working on an instructional book tentatively scheduled for release in the spring.

"The happiest part of my day is when the golfer has an epiphany and says they get it; it's very gratifying," Fredericks says. "I went from being very dysfunctional to very functional. I was unhealthy, and because of Ric and Peter, I'm where I am today. I've always had this burning desire to carry the message and help people the way they helped me, and I am able to do that now."

## How to get in shape

**The personal sessions:** At La Costa Resort in Carlsbad, Fredericks offers three specific golf experiences: the Golf Swing Analysis & Flexibility Program (\$395 per session), Golf Instruction (\$175 per hour), and Flexibility and Conditioning Programs (\$195 per session). He and his staff also offer golf and playing lessons. Learn more at [www.roger4par.com](http://www.roger4par.com) or call 888/304-3539 (FLEX).

**The videos:** With Fredericks' best-selling *Secrets to Golf Swing Flexibility* series, players can increase their flexibility in the comfort of their own home. Includes three DVDs, poster, and take-along booklet. Visit the Pro Shop on his Web site to purchase all of the training aids seen in the videos as well. \$89.85 from [www.fredericksgolf.com](http://www.fredericksgolf.com).

