



## **BODY TYPING**

As many will be aware all players and golfers share different psychological characteristics, which result in swings that works for your playing partner, may not working for you.

During the 1950s an American WH Sheldon, classified people into three different shapes, depending on their height, weight, muscle and fat, it is the mix of these factors that gives a person their shape. Although we cannot radically change our height and bone structure, we can affect the ratio of muscle and fat through various physical preparation programmes. The main three body types that Sheldon identified were ectomorphs, mesomorphs and endomorphs although there are very few people who can be classified as wholly one type or another, it is common that there will be a mix, with a tendency towards one of the main types. It is because we are all different that you must be careful if you are intending to copy a player, at least make sure that their body type is similar to that of your own.

**Ectomorph:** Generally this group are tall with narrow shoulders and hips, thin face, high forehead, thin arms and legs, little muscle and a low ratio of body fat. Often they have poor body posture as a result of their height.

**Effects:** Tall players are able to produce a longer lever system due to the distance between the top of the shoulder and the club head being greater than normal, this has the potential to produce a longer and higher ball flight. Low body fat when combined with good flexibility can increase body rotation around the spine but care must be taken as a stooped posture is common and when combined with weak muscles at the back of the body or tight muscles at the front will affect the way in which they stand to the ball. As a general rule this group of players should work postural exercises, stretching tight muscle groups and strengthening weak ones.



**Mesomorph:** Commonly mesomorphs have broad shoulders, narrow hips, square head, muscular arms and legs and a small amount of body fat.

**Effects:** Normally this group of players have good aerobic fitness allowing for intensive practice and can easily complete the round without any significant physical stress. Natural strength helps to generate high club head speed but muscle bulk can lead to short and tight muscles reducing their range of movement causing problems with rotation, affecting the overall fluency of the swing. Most players in this group should place particular emphasis on stretching programs to increase flexibility, promote speed and avoid injury.

**Endomorph** Normally slightly shorter in height with narrow shoulders, wide hips, large head, fat on arms and legs, high ratio of body fat.

**Effects:** This group of players often have a lower centre of gravity due to their height, helping to create good balance through the swing. The amount of body fat around the abdominal region may reduce the range and speed of their body rotation, if accompanied by weak abdominal muscles this may result in stress on the spine perhaps resulting in injury to the lower back. It is wise for this group to include a good stretching program for the hips and lower back in their physical preparation programme. Weight loss, aerobic exercise and specific abdominal strengthening will also help improve performance.

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