

Golf Fitness WITH Anne van Dam

LET winner Anne van Dam is not only known for her stellar swing and monster drives – the Dutch Olympian averages over 290 yards off the tee – but also for her outstanding athletic achievements.



Anne performing a Turkish get-up, targeting full body strength.



Back in December, van Dam ran the Ironman 70.3 in California, a gruelling challenge consisting of a 1.2-mile swim, 56-mile bike ride, and 13.1 mile run. Finishing the race in a highly impressive time of six hours and eight minutes, van Dam also helped raise over \$15,000 to support Grace Park, the two-year-old daughter of fellow player Jane Park, who suffers with undiagnosed epilepsy.

Committed to staying in as best shape as possible, van Dam has since started her own fitness series on Instagram: Workout Wednesday. Joining forces with golf performance coach Liesbeth Pauwels for a recent training session, van Dam shares more about her fitness goals, lessons, and challenges.

“Fitness is obviously a very big part of my life. I do many other sports and have a lot of interest in them. I get a lot of questions on Instagram asking to post some more workouts. I thought, how can I make something fun out of that? So I’m now doing a different workout every Wednesday with a different trainer and a fun workout to inspire people – especially young girls – to do more fitness. It is also nice to take a piece of culture along with, do some Thai boxing or try other certain sports.”

Why Workout Wednesday?

“It’s a nice challenge for me. It’s nice that you train with someone new every time and it gives me new inspiration myself. Also, for inspiring other golfers and especially young girls.”

What opportunity do you think there is?

“You see that people spend a lot more time indoors and there is more obesity. You see far fewer people moving and enjoying sports together. I just know how good you feel when you exercise well, eat well, take good care of your health. You just get so much out of it that I hope to inspire others.”

What kind of workouts have been most effective in recent years?

“That’s a good question. I always like workouts that are shorter with few breaks. Especially at tournaments where it’s easy for me to keep up. After one round you’re going to hit the gym for 20 to 30 minutes and then you’re sweating nicely, you feel that you’ve worked out really well. I really like that in tournaments, because then I don’t feel like spending an hour in the gym after my round. Especially during Covid,

I went cycling a lot. I already ran, but cycling in particular was an outlet for me to let go of my mind, especially in my free weeks. I also think variety is key for me. If I do the same thing too often and for too long, it gets very boring, so I'm always looking for the challenge of new workouts and new sports."

What do you notice on the LET and LPGA?

"I think fitness is now taken much more seriously. I've been on the LET for nine years now. When I look at my rookie year, I was one of the only ones in the gym. And if you look at the last few weeks, you see 15-20 girls in the gym when I'm there and they're doing serious workouts. I like seeing that shift. In women's golf it's increasingly a determining factor. Many more fit girls really hit it far. I like to see that and it really is the change of recent years."

What would you like to achieve with workout Wednesday?

"I hope to inspire many girls to exercise more, to try things, that they see a workout and say 'hey I like that, I'm going to try that myself.' I hope that golf fitness becomes more accessible and people feel easier to start exercising. You don't even have to think that big, even half an hour outside or a walk in the morning. You don't have to go to a gym right away or have a bike. At least have more awareness, like walking for an hour and not taking the phone. Things like that. For myself, my goal is always to stay injury-free. I pay a lot of attention to that. If I'm fit enough for the whole year and can play well, that's always my goal physically."

How do you pay attention to that?

"My physio travels with me on tour every week. Furthermore, in exercises, in massage, wellness and supplements, but also in recovery. That is a big investment. But it's definitely worth it. Especially if you play and travel so much."

What's something you're taking with you from living on the road?

"Pilates. I think that it's hands down the best workout you can do. It's so hard on your core. I think few people when they go there for the first time they can stick with it. I couldn't even last the first ten times. If you do that regularly you will get a better posture. Many people are of course working and that is also neglecting your core and those little muscles. It's the small movements that are sometimes more difficult than squatting heavy ten times. And you also get more out of it."

Have you ever experienced a challenging period physically?

"Yes, definitely. And I really don't feel old yet. But I've been playing as a professional for almost ten years and I notice that I now have to take more time for my own body than I did in the first year. I could play every tournament, fly from time zone to time zone and it all went so smoothly and I hardly had any pains, I was much more flexible. As you get older I also notice that on Tour you have to pay attention to your rest. Listen carefully to your body. I always say invest in your body. That is what I have never skipped on and will never stop prioritizing fitness."



Anne performing a hamstring stretch and hip opener, targeting hip mobilisation, which is extremely important in the golf swing.

That resonates! Thanks to yoga I have learned to listen to my body. My normal standard back in the day was that I always keep going, no matter what.

“And that’s the main thing. Just listen to your body. I find that so difficult too. Of course, I’ve worked with a lot of trainers, and then you come in and you feel a bit tired, you come from a long journey, you’re on your period, there are so many things that someone else doesn’t realise. That’s where you have to pay attention and always listen to your own body. That also has to do with when I’m at a tournament and I’m just really tired and have jet lag. I don’t feel well then, I say I’m not going to do anything on Tuesday, I’m going to lie in bed all day and go to sleep.”

Did you find that difficult?

“Certainly in the beginning, but you also learn that over the years. You only have one body and I always say, I’d rather pay \$200 in supplements and massages and stuff like that than have this and that and be on meds later. And of course, you never know what will happen, but yes you do have clear choices in life that you can make.”

Is there anything else you want to share?

“Cold Therapy! That really improved my life. I have a cold plunge at home and that’s the first thing I do in the morning as soon as I wake up. It’s really hell. I sometimes do two minutes, sometimes three minutes, and when I train harder, I often only do my legs five to eight minutes. How you feel afterwards, mentally and physically, is so special. I wish I had known sooner what that does for your body. It’s hard at tournaments, but I always take a cold shower in the morning. I notice in the morning that I just feel much better. Much more energy, a better mood. You just notice that your body is warming up and all those substances that are released, you really notice that. It’s hard to describe, but you feel sharper, more focused, clear-headed. You have such a good foundation throughout the day and you are so much happier. It’s really bizarre. In terms of recovery and of course mental strength. I wake up and I think I won’t do it, and I then do it anyway and how you feel afterwards, that is really 100 times better for me than waking up and making coffee to start the day. Anyone can do that, that’s the easy route!”



Liesbeth Pauwels

(@lp.golf.performance)

Is a golf movement expert and Europe’s leading golf performance coach with over 10 years of experience in the industry. Her global mission is a strong golf community.

For more information visit www.lpgolfperformance.nl