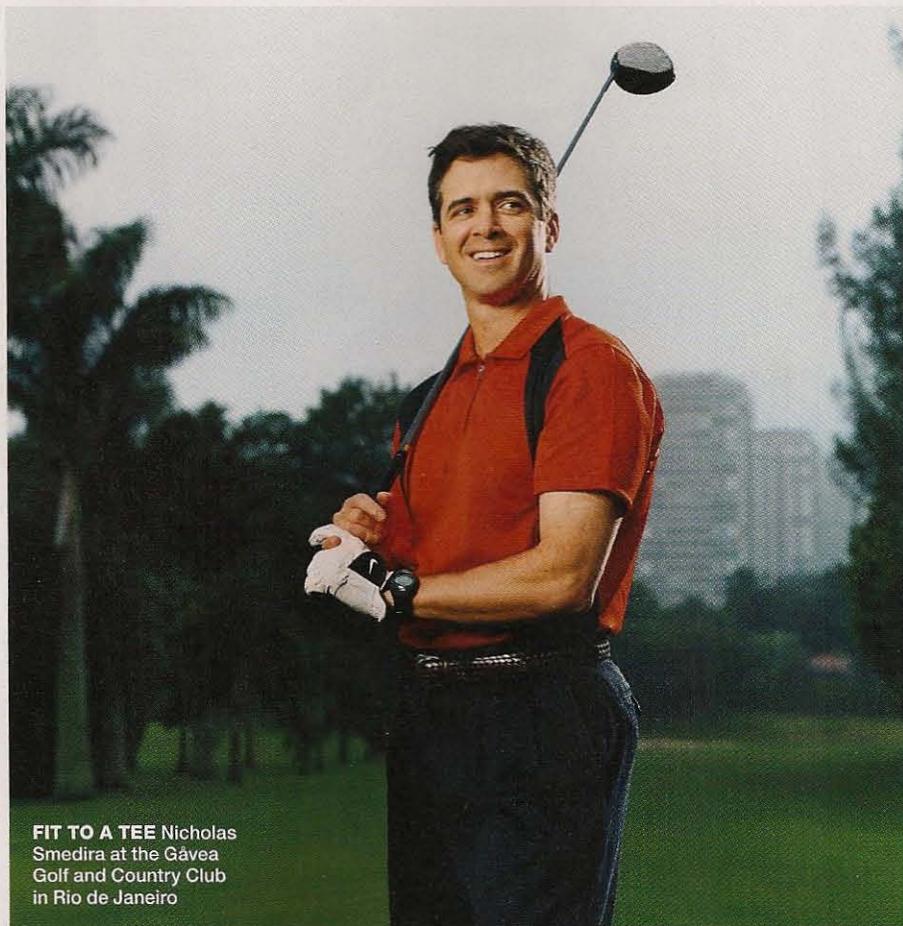


# The Hard Drive

A stronger core helps the nation's top heart doctor master the greens

Like most duffers, Nicholas Smedira, M.D., wanted more distance on his shots. So 2 years ago, as part of a plan to improve his golf game and get in great shape, he started doing a workout designed to strengthen his core muscles, which are pivotal to all body movements. But he had a problem finding time to exercise. As the director of transplants at the Cleveland Clinic Heart & Vascular Institute, Smedira routinely puts in 14-hour days. He started working out with a trainer, but the trips to and from the gym ate into family time with his wife and three kids. So the 44-year-old surgeon converted his basement into a workout room and picked up *Core Performance*, by Mark Verstegen, which offered just what he was looking for: an aggressive strengthening-and-stretching routine that takes less than 1 hour. Smedira works out 3 days a week before work and follows the exercise plan when he's lecturing at conferences around the world—unless there's a good course nearby. AMY LEVIN-EPSTEIN



**FIT TO A TEE** Nicholas Smedira at the Gávea Golf and Country Club in Rio de Janeiro

## WARMUP (15 minutes)

Smedira starts with 5 minutes of rope jumping or fast walking on the treadmill. Then he does core stretches: 10 hip cross-overs that work the lower back and abs; 10 backward lunges with a twist for the hip flexors, quads, and abs; 10 forward lunges for the groin, hip flexors, glutes, and hamstrings; and hand-walking stretches for the hamstrings, calves, and lower back. (For step-by-step descriptions and diagrams of these stretches, go to [BestLifeOnline.com](http://BestLifeOnline.com).)

## STRENGTH CONDITIONING (15 minutes)

Smedira exercises without pause to maintain a heart rate of 60 percent of his maximum. (Calculate your max by subtracting your age from 200.) He wears a heart-rate monitor to make sure he stays in that zone while doing two sets of 12 repetitions of the following: dumbbell bench presses with 35-pound weights, arm curls with 20-pound weights, pushups off a stability ball, and glute bridging. For the latter, lie faceup with your knees

bent 90 degrees and heels on the floor. Squeeze a rolled-up towel between your knees. With your belly button drawn in, bridge your hips toward the ceiling by firing your glutes. Only your shoulders and heels remain on the ground. Hold for 1 second, then lower your hips and repeat. (You should feel it in your glutes, not in your lower back or hamstrings.)

## CARDIOVASCULAR (15 minutes)

Smedira does interval training (stairclimbing, running, or rope jumping), but he needs only a

limited amount since his heart rate stays elevated. "It's so much more efficient to do a 45-minute workout and keep your heart rate up than having to go for an hour-and-a-half jog," he says.

## COOLDOWN (5 minutes)

Smedira lies on the floor and wraps a jump rope around one of his feet to help him stretch his hamstrings, quads, and hips. To stretch his triceps, he takes the rope in his right hand and puts it behind his neck so his elbow is pointed up. Then

he grabs the bottom of the rope with his left hand behind his lower back, palm facing out, and pulls downward, holding the stretch for several seconds, then repeats with his arms in reverse positions. Next, Smedira spends a few minutes doing practice swings with his clubs. "In the golf swing, one tends to sway right to left or back and forward," says Smedira. "But in core movement, you learn to twist and turn from your core without moving side to side or up and down." That translates into increased power off the tee and on the fairway.

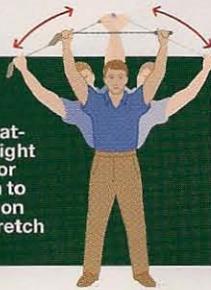
## 9-IRON MAN

Use your clubs to limber up

**1 TORSO ROTATION** Standing with your feet shoulder-width apart, rest a club across your shoulders. Turn your upper body and head to the right as far as you can without moving your legs or feet. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat on the opposite side. This will improve weight transfer during a swing.



**2 OVERHEAD SIDE BENDS** Standing upright with your feet flat, hold a club straight above your head. Without rotating your torso, bend to your right side as far as you can. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, then return to the starting position. Repeat on the opposite side. This will stretch your shoulders and torso.



**3 SHOULDER AND LOWER-BACK EXTENSION** Standing with your feet flat and shoulder-width apart, grasp a club behind your lower back. Bend forward slightly at the waist and raise your arms behind you. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat nine times; don't bounce.



Excerpted from *Golf After 50: Playing Without Pain* (Rodale).