

## GOLF INJURIES AND PREVENTION OF GOLFING INJURIES

### YOUR BACK AND GOLF

A guide to improving Spinal mobility and preventing back Pain in Golf

#### INTRODUCTION

Most golfers will either suffer a back injury or will be restricted in playing golf due to Back or neck pain. Good posture and spinal mobility are essential not only to improve back swing and follow through in golf but also will help prevent spinal and Musculo-skeletal injuries eg disc lesions, muscular strain or joint stiffness.

#### GOOD POSTURE = MAINTAINING SPINAL CURVES

The spine is made up of vertebrae, discs, ligaments and muscles

The Spinal Curves

- Promote good mobility
- Allows even pressure of the spine
- Allows golfers body weight to be transferred over a greater surface area, therefore allowing less stress on the spine
- Promotes more efficient biomechanical movement through axis of the spine and will ensure smooth and efficient “backswing and follow through”

#### GOLFERS NEED GOOD POSTURAL CURVATURE = GOOD SPINAL MOBILITY = SMOOTH AND EFFICIENT BACK SWING AND FOLLOW THROUGH TO HELP PREVENT BACK PAIN

#### Causes of Back Pain and Neck Pain in Golfers

- Previous occupational and domestic injuries that are aggravated by golf eg. prolonged sitting in a car or at a desk, poor seating at home, gardening, poor lifting techniques.
- Prolonged bending in practice
- Prolonged practising
- Weak muscle groups related to Golf eg. Abdominal Muscles, Latissimus dorsi and lower Trapezius
- Predisposing pathology eg. Arthritis, disc lesions, history of back pain
- Excessively forceful movements during follow through stage in swing
- Constant flexing and straightening up after taking your shot
- Picking up practice balls without bending your knees
- Slow competition eg. prolonged standing while waiting for the group who are playing the whole in front
- Poor lifting, handling and assembling techniques with your golf bag and buggy
- Repeated twisting component involved in swing geometry
- Most notably not carrying out preventative stretches prior, during and after playing golf.

#### How many times are you in a “STRESSED, FLEXED” POSITION

1. Driving your car to the golf course;
2. Assembling your buggy;

3. Putting practice;
4. Teeing up the ball;
5. Checking your ball in "four ball" competitions or in the rough;
6. Selecting your clubs from your golf bag;
7. Pushing your buggy especially up hill;
8. Repairing pitch marks, filling up divots with sand or filling up sand bucket at the sand pit;
9. Searching through your golf bag;
10. Lifting up practice balls;
11. Getting the ball out of the hole;
12. Lifting your clubs and buggy in and out of the car.

***When lifting always bend your knees and keep your back straight***

## **YOUR ARMS AND GOLF**

For the special treatment of golf injuries preventative exercises, fitness assessments and individual exercise programs for all standards of golfers.

A guide to improving flexibility strength including injury prevention at the shoulder, elbow, wrist & hand whilst playing golf.

## **INTRODUCTION**

**After Back injuries, Upper limb injuries are the most prevalent in golf.** This section highlights the most common injuries that may occur in the upper limbs and most importantly, suitable stretches for their prevention.

## **THE SHOULDER**

The shoulder is a **Ball and Socket Joint** which is shallow and supported by **the rotator cuff muscle group**. As we age, this joint can degenerate and tendons of the rotator cuff muscle group can become inflamed, strained or tethered.

## **CAUSES OF SHOULDER INJURIES**

- Repeatedly doing the same movements ie. acceleration phase during follow through
- Underlying pathological injuries eg. work related injuries, tendonitis, calcification and arthritic
- Not stretching before, during or after playing golf
- Incorrect lifting and carrying of ones golf clubs in and out of the car and on the golf course
- Poor technique in the golf swing
- Golf club shafts too rigid (especially as one gets older)
- Related shock through the arm during impact of the club head as it hits the ground (this effect maybe worsened during the summer months if the ground is hard)

## **MULTI-FUNCTIONAL STRETCHES FOR SHOULDERS, ELBOWS, WRISTS AND HANDS**

1. Do stretches slowly and hold for at least 10 seconds
2. Feel the tissues slowly pay out. Remember to repeat both sides

3. Stretching should not cause pain. If there is severe pain stop stretch immediately. Seek advice from your Physiotherapist.
4. Pull thumb away from fingers towards the wrist.
5. Hold arm out in front of you, palm upwards with the other hand pull the fingers back to the body. Feel a stretch on the inside of the arm and wrist.
6. Interlock the fingers, palms together, slowly rotate thumbs to the left, back to centre and to the right. Remember to keep shoulders down.
7. For the chest, place your arm at a right angles to your body against a doorway, wall or post, and slowly rotate your body to the other side to the point of stretch. Feel it across your chest.

## THE ELBOW

The elbow is essentially a hinge joint. The most common injuries that golfers may suffer from are TENNIS ELBOW and GOLFERS ELBOW. Contrary to popular to belief, Tennis elbow is the more prevalent.

### GOLFERS ELBOW

Occurs mainly on the inside of the Right elbow of a right-handed golfer and vice versa for those left-handed. It is equally prevalent in both male and female.

#### COMMON CAUSES:

1. Caused by stress on the forearm and wrist flexors during the golf swing
2. Over emphasizing wrist release on contact with the ball
3. Gripping the club too tightly or changing your grips without the Golf Professional's advice. This places increased shock through the elbow.
4. Poor technique, especially on excessive supination and pronation in the golf swing.
5. Swinging the club too forcefully.
6. In women there is often an increased elbow angle compared to that of men.

### TENNIS ELBOW

**Is felt with pain and tenderness occurring on the most outer point of the elbow.** As symptoms worsen pain radiates down the forearm to the wrist and leads to an inability to play.

#### COMMON CAUSES:

1. The thumbs and the index fingers squeezing more tightly on the club than little, ring and middle fingers.
2. Gripping the club too tightly, may be due to worn/wet grips or the grips not being thick enough eg. arthritic golfers.
3. Club shafts being too rigid causing extra shock through the arms on impact with the ball.
4. Incorrect "cock up" of the right wrist and vice versa in the back swing especially whilst practicing chipping.
5. Poor technique.
6. Constant repetition of the same shots on hard ground or practice mats and also over repetition of golf drifts.

## GENERAL ADVICE

- Always stretch before, during and after playing golf
- Always seek the Golf Professional's advice on swing technique and correct gripping of the club to prevent injury
- If injury occurs **Rest, Ice, Compress and Elevate.**
- If the injury prevails seek medical advice as neglecting treatment may lead to a chronic injury.
- This will cause the golfer to reduce his/her playing time and overall performance.
- Check your grips and club shafts are of adequate standard eg. wet or worn grips may cause the golfer to squeeze the club too tightly.

## THE WRIST

Is used in stabilizing the hand while gripping the golf club. It is also important in the "cock up" phase of the back swing and wrist release on impact with the golf ball.

## CAUSES OF INJURY

- Excessive repetition during practice.
- Over emphasis of wrist "cock up" during chipping practice.
- Shock caused by forceful contact with the ground.

## INJURIES

Tenosynovitis in the tendons, Tendinitis, Musculo-ligamentous strains and arthritic changes as we get older.

## A GUIDE TO HANDLING YOUR BUGGY AND CARRYING YOUR GOLF CLUBS

This section outlines safe handling of your golf bag & buggy

## INTRODUCTION

Spinal and shoulder injuries do occur through poor technique in pushing and pulling Golf Buggies. These injuries can happen with inappropriate "Lifting and Handling" of the Golf Bag itself.

## WHEN CARRYING YOUR GOLF BAG

To Prevent Injury To Your Back, Neck and Shoulders:

- Always bend your knees and keep your back straight when lifting your Golf Bag off the ground
- Always use both handles of your golf bag to lift it in and out of your car and when placing on or lifting it off your buggy
- Try to keep your bag as light as possible when carrying your bag as this places less stress on your neck, shoulders and back eg. less golf balls/clubs/waterproofs or other accessories when not required

- Carefully adjust the strap of your golf bag to ensure it is not too slack, placing less stress on your neck and shoulder region
- Alternate between your right and left shoulder when carrying your clubs in order to prevent excess stress on shoulder region
- Ensure clubs are evenly distributed in your golf club compartments of your bag to allow even weight transferal.

## HANDLING YOUR BUGGY

Remember to adjust the handle of the buggy to your waist level so that you are using a comfortable range of movement of your shoulder and elbow.

## TO PUSH OR PULL ONE'S BUGGY? THAT IS THE QUESTION

- Generally pushing the buggy in front of you promotes easier manoeuvring especially if you have good tyres, "3" wheels or wide slick wheels.
- For people with neck and shoulder problems, pushing will be the best approach.
- The only exception is on uneven ground or going up kerbs, where upon pulling would give you better control.
- If you habitually pull your buggy try to alternate between left and right arms. This minimizes straining your back or shoulder on one side of the body.
- When going up hill, make sure you use your hips and knees to push your buggy and ensure you Push with your back straight.

## MAINTAINING YOUR BUGGY

1. Regular oiling of buggy wheels will prevent friction, thus reducing the chance of straining your arms or back.
2. Check that screws and nuts are tight to prevent uneven loading.
3. Small tyres may lead to more jarring when pulling/pushing through arm and shoulder may eventually result in acute strain occurring.

## HOW ABOUT HAVING A THIRD WHEEL ON YOUR BUGGY?

A third wheel gives you the best stability – Pushing or Pulling a buggy with a third wheel promoted smoother movement over grass and other surfaces around the golf course.

1. Specific exercises to strengthen your Back, Shoulders and Legs will prevent Injuries Occurring
2. Always Bend Your Knees and keep your Back Straight when Assembling your Bag or holding your Golf Clubs

"NEVER" drag your Golf Bag. If you have mobility problems a Hand Motorised Buggy is recommended particularly on long and hilly courses. If in doubt, always seek advice and assessment from your Golf Professional and Physiotherapist.

*This information brought to you by the Physio Studio, Binfield Bracknell's premier physiotherapy practice.*

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