

# Quality care sports injury & rehab inc.

## Golf & Injury Prevention

**Golf** is a unique sport because the main skill used is very specific and repetitive. It is easy to see how this could be potentially damaging to the body. Players who have restricted range of motion in one or more joints and/or inadequate core strength will have flawed golf swings and thus risk injury due to this repetitive motion. By learning proper swing mechanics, addressing any injured or inflexible body parts, increasing core strength and practicing proper warm-up, golfers can both reduce their risk of injury and improve their final score!

### The Golf Swing & Injury

Each stage of the golf swing puts strain on different regions of the body. Additionally, the modern swing puts additional strain on the low back, due to the increased twisting required on wind-up, when compared to the classic golf swing.

The *downswing phase* causes the greatest amount of injuries compared to any other part of the swing. Of biggest concern is the fate of the rotator cuff group and the forearm flexors. These small muscles of the shoulder and forearm are tasked with decelerating the arm. During a decelerating contraction, muscles actually have to create more force than during a normal contraction. Therefore the result is potential rotator cuff strains and tendonitis, as well as medial and lateral epicondylitis or "golfers and tennis elbow".

On the *follow-through phase*, as the body turns with the golf club, inflexible hip joints can cause a transfer of strain to the low back as it hyper-extends to get a greater

range of motion.

Notably, during both the backswing and follow-through phases, the shoulder rotator cuff muscles can become impinged as the arms are raised above shoulder level.

In short, at each stage throughout the swing, inflexibility or inadequate strength will transfer stresses to another part of the body, which in time can cause pain, strain, or injury.

### An Ounce of Prevention

Is worth a pound of cure! Following simple stretching and strengthening techniques, implementing a proper warm-up, and getting any injury assessed by a rehabilitation professional will help golfers maintain a strong and flexible body that will hold up to the rigors of a long golf season!

These simple exercises, done once a day, can target areas of the body that often contribute to golfing injuries.

#### 1 Shoulder Flexibility:

A posterior capsule stretch held

for at least 30 sec will allow proper shoulder range of motion both on the backswing and follow through. As well, the arm pendulum exercise can be used to loosen the shoulder joint prior to playing.

#### 2 Core Strength:

A strong core consists of more than six-pack abs. The full core consists of back, abdominal, pelvic, gluteal and diaphragm muscles. When activated together, these muscles allow the spine to move together as one unit, providing for safe and efficient back rotation through the swing. Holding both neutral and side planks for 10-30 seconds with knees either bent or straight is a great way to begin challenging the core in a safe and effective way.

#### 3 Hip Flexibility:

The hips need to flex, extend, and rotate during a full golf swing, in order to take the load off the lower back. Hip flexor/quadriceps, hamstring, and hip rotator stretches repeated three times each and held for 30s will help improve overall hip flexibility.

### Warm-up

Once flexibility and strength has improved, a proper warm-up before playing will help activate muscles and reduce the risk of injury due. A warm-up should consist of light activity, like march-

ing on the spot, for five minutes, followed by dynamic stretches. Dynamic stretches work the body through the range of motion needed for the sport but also keep the body warm. Try a forward walking lunge with trunk rotation, arm circles, and walking toe touches, to name a few. Progress to light practice swings without a ball. These will help wake up the body and get it used to moving into the ranges needed for golf.

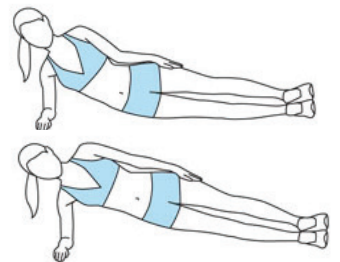


#### Posterior Capsule Stretch

Hold 30 sec  
2 – 3 times  
each arm.

#### Side Plank

Hold up to 30 sec  
2 – 3 times each side.



#### Hip Flexor Stretch

Hold 30sec  
2 – 3 times  
each leg.