

Topic of the Week

Issue 3, March 2010

WE CARE ABOUT YOUR HEALTH

Chiropractic is a Golfer's Best Friend

Presented by: Fox Valley Chiropractic

If they weren't a necessary component of a popular sport, the movements involved with a golf swing would be banned by most chiropractors. The repetitive, one-sided nature of the golf swing makes it a common cause for back injuries. They're several reasons why the golf swing is so problematic for the body. First, it requires great flexibility, which most people lack. Second, it requires good posture, which is also uncommon. Third, the power move in golf is always one-sided, leading to muscle and joint imbalances.

Flexibility for Power

According to Butch Harmon, one of the foremost authorities on the golf swing, in order for golfers to generate more power and more distance, they are coached to "feel their arms staying in front of the body as they turn back."¹ Todd Anderson, a Golf Digest teaching professional, goes into more detail by suggesting that a proper backswing should see "the shoulders starting parallel to the target line and turning 90 degrees, the hips turning to 45 degrees, and the knees turning to 22 degrees."² This means the backswing will generate a lot of spinal twist and loading.

Compounding this amount of torque with near-maximum acceleration in the downswing is a recipe for disaster. Repeating this move 50-70 times per round makes it difficult to stay injury free over the course of your golfing life.

This kind of movement requires flexibility not only in the spine, but also in the shoulders and hips. To ensure that you have the kind of flexibility that allows you to take a proper golf swing, have your chiropractor check the range of motion of these joints. If you have any tightness in these areas, your chiropractor can perform specific adjustments to help these joints move better and may suggest stretches to help keep them moving properly.



Presented by:

Fox Valley Chiropractic

1750 East Main Street, Suite 60, St. Charles, IL 60174 Phone:(630) 377-8844

Exercise of the Week

Lumbar stabilization (stage 3)

Plank Position

Difficulty: Moderate

(Consult your chiropractor before engaging this or any other exercise.)

Start: Lie down on stomach. Then, begin by propping upper body up onto elbows/forearms, with hands together in prayer position. Engage inner abdominal muscles by bringing belly button inward. Keeping spine steady, lift hips and knees so you're resting on toes, creating a straight line from ankles to shoulders.

Exercise: Keeping spine steady, lift one leg 6-8 inches. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 1) If this is relatively easy, try bringing that leg horizontally out to side as far as you can, keeping torso steady. Hold this position for 10-20 seconds. (Option 2) Switch legs, and repeat. Perform 3-5 sets of this exercise per side. Be careful not to strain lower back.



Good Posture for the Set Up

When a golf pro is asked to create a good, repeatable golf swing, one of his first tasks is to establish a proper set up. This is the golfer's starting position when addressing the ball. Posture is of utmost importance here. Maintaining natural curves throughout the spine with good posture ensures that maximum rotation will be achievable in both the backswing and the follow through.

To illustrate this point, sit on a bench and allow your body to slouch. Cross your arms, placing your hands on opposite shoulders. Then, try to rotate fully to one side, then the other. Ask someone to observe how far you can go. Try again, but this time start by sitting upright first. Notice how much further your spine can rotate when you start with good spinal posture.³

Ask your chiropractor if your lower back has the proper spinal curve when standing normally and when demonstrating a set-up position for the golf swing. If you suffer from restrictions and displacements in your body, these could be preventing you from achieving normal postural positions. And it could be taking 10, 20 or 30 yards off your best drives! See how much easier it is to swing the golf club after your chiropractor corrects this problem.



One-Sided Sport Requires Special Attention

The amount of effort exerted by most amateur golfers when driving a golf ball has been estimated at 90 percent of their peak muscular activity. This level of exertion has been compared to those used in sports like football, hockey and martial arts.³ This amount of physical effort, combined with the one-sided nature of the swing, requires a lot of special attention. If a person is not careful, over-exertion can easily lead to stress and strain.



Chiropractic treatments are very effective at re-establishing proper biomechanics in and around every joint of the body. However, maintaining proper function remains the patient's responsibility. Preparation for golf should include an adequate warm-up, proper stretching, and a lot of core stabilization training. It's no wonder that many of the PGA professionals have trainers and chiropractors join them when they go on tour. Make sure to tell your chiropractor that you are a golfer so particular attention will be given to the areas of the body to maximize your golf swing.

Disclaimer: Information contained in this Topic of the Week™ Newsletter is for educational and general purposes only and is designed to assist you in making informed decisions about your health. Any information contained herein is not intended to substitute advice from your physician or other healthcare professional.

Copyright 2010 Mediadoc™

Quote of the Week

"Health is the thing that makes you feel that now is the best time of the year."

- Franklin Pierce Adams

For more health tips, visit online
www.citruspie.com



References and Sources:

1. Anderson T. Power – Load it and let it go.
Golf Digest 2010; 61(1): 68-71.
2. Harmon B. Nick Watney's power pointers: How he became a great driver – you can, too.
Golf Digest 2010; 61(2): 68-71.
3. Blanchard J. & Finkel L. Chiropractic and Golf: A therapeutic treatment and prevention program.
Online:
<http://www.dynamicchiropractic.com/mpacms/dc/article.php?id=1833>



Topic of the Week

newsletters are written and designed by
Mediadoc
exclusively for its chiropractic clients.

Writer/Editor: David Coyne
Writer: Dr. Christian Guenette, DC
Design: Elena Zhukova
Photos: Fred Goldstein