

KANSAS CITY GOLF

TOURNAMENT & TRAVEL MAGAZINE

March/April 2005

This issue compliments of:



Hill Country Golf: San Antonio, Texas

THE PHYSICAL GAME

Performance, Practice and Professional Care

By Dr. Lynn McIntosh

The game of golf makes very real and specific demands on the body. Optimal performance and enjoyment of the game requires that attention be paid to these physical demands. Unfortunately, injuries and pain are often the catalysts for paying attention to the unique physical requirements of the game. Even before pain alerts the golfer to strain or injury, knowledge of the body's movement and ongoing care can insure long-term participation, enjoyment of the game, and optimal performance.

Sports such as golf and tennis require repeated twisting of the body's torso. This repeated twisting involves wear on the spinal discs and soft tissues of the back, often resulting in a loss of healthy position and motion. The compromise on position and motion can exert pressure on adjacent nerves, potentially impairing neural function throughout the body.

Even before a player is side-lined by a sports-related injury, the body may be functioning at a much compromised ability level. Any malfunction in the neuromusculoskeletal system causes the

body to compensate by changing or adapting physical function. This compensation requires expending more energy for the achievement of similar results, impedes full function and threatens performance.



Spinal, joint and muscle injuries limit motion, strength, endurance and speed. Trained athletes often suffer such injuries, but the recreational golfer is much more vulnerable to the particular physical demands of the game. Lack of flexibility and inadequate ongoing conditioning make the recreational golfer especially sus-

ceptible to strain, muscle tearing, and joint inflammation. For these players, injuries occur more often and recovery takes more time. Complete recovery from strain or injury is not possible without the restoration of position and motion.

Golf-related injuries are most often related to technical errors made repeatedly in the swing. It is important to remember that practice does not necessarily make perfect, practice makes permanent! The use of proper swing mechanics, every time, is the most effective way to avoid injury.

Lack of general physical fitness is also critical to injury prevention. Whether golfing regularly or away from the course in the off-season, participation in a regular physical fitness program increases aerobic capacity, muscle strength and overall body flexibility. Golf IS exercise! Studies involving continuous heart-rate monitoring of players have shown that the body consumes up to four times more oxygen while playing than while resting.

Exercises that increase muscle strength are critical to the prevention of injury (as well as dramatically improving distance and drive!). Golf injuries occur most regularly in the spine and upper extremities – shoulders, elbows, wrists and hands. Repetition is the key to strengthening the upper body and upper extremities. Working repeatedly with light weights makes a very real and healthy difference. The muscles in the

legs are most effectively maintained and strengthened with more weight and less repetition. Strength in the legs results in a secure, powerful stance and enhances a technically correct swing.

Pre-game warm-up is always recommended! An effective warm-up routine involves stretching of the lower back, shoulders, elbows, wrists and legs.

The unique physical demands of the game and the types of related potential injuries make golfers especially responsive to chiropractic care. A chiropractor is specifically trained to diagnose and treat compromise and injury to the spine and joints. The chiropractic doctor specializes in restoring spinal function with a series of manipulations that gradually realign the bones of the spine. A limited number of chiropractors have completed advance training in the diagnosis and treatment of athletes. These Certified Chiropractic Sports Physicians (CCSP) are specifically equipped to provide care designed to reduce inflammation and increase joint function. Your chiropractor may also suggest related therapies such as hot or cold compresses to reduce inflammation, massage to speed the healing of soft tissue, and aggressive exercise to increase muscle condition and joint flexibility.

Many potential problems can be avoided or minimized by early detection and chiropractic correction of joint dysfunction. Your chiropractor can also provide guidance for developing a healthy pattern of conditioning, strengthening, and exercise specifically designed to enhance your golf game. Your chiropractor can help you understand your musculoskeletal structure, making you more aware of the self-care necessary to sustain your long-term ability to play. Regardless of your age, conditioning, health, or level of play, chiropractic care can improve your athletic potential and maximize your performance on the golf course.

Dr. McIntosh is a board certified Chiropractor, licensed in both Kansas and Missouri. In addition to being licensed to provide general chiropractic care, Dr. McIntosh is a Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician, working with athletes from multiple disciplines on specific sports-related problems. She can be reached at 816-753-4600.

Golf Talk

Achieving a certain level of success in golf is only important if you can finally enjoy the level you've reached after you've reached it.