

Preventing Golf Injuries

As most golfers can attest, swinging a club 70-100 times and chasing a ball for 3-6 miles can lead to some painful problems. Here are a handful of the most common golf-related injuries plus several valuable tips to stay healthy.

Common Injuries

HAND & WRIST INJURIES

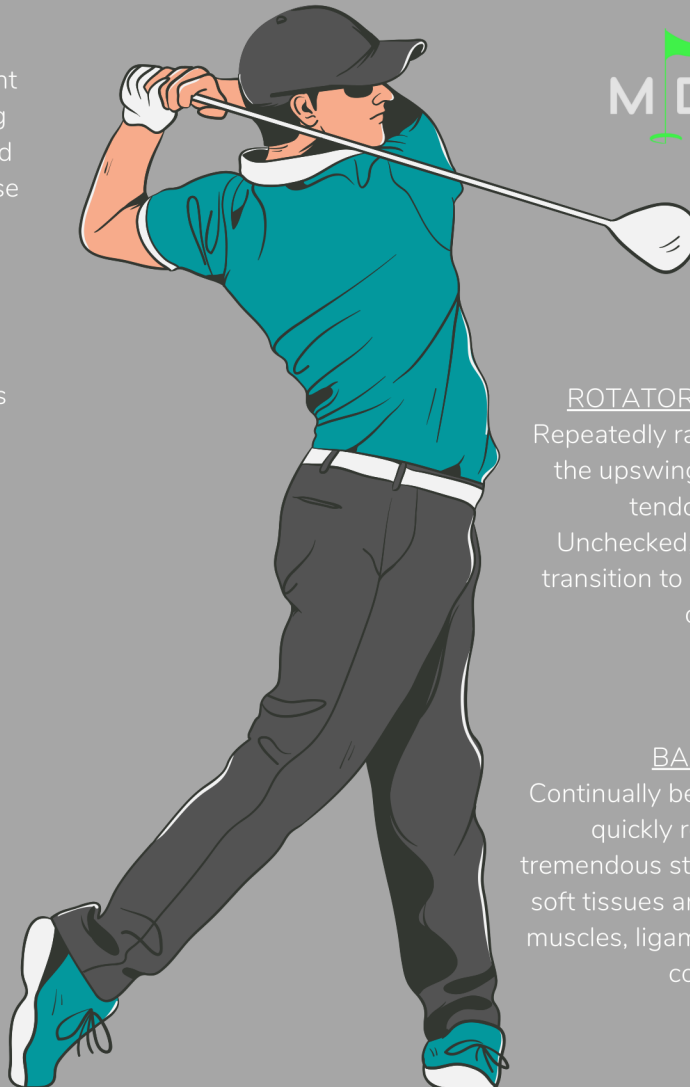
Attach a long lever to a small joint and swiftly hit something sitting on the hard ground - What could go wrong? Anything from overuse strains to broken bones.

ELBOW TENDONITIS

Firmly gripping a club places stress on the bony bumps where your wrist and forearm muscles attach to your elbow. Pain on the inside bump is called "Golfers elbow," while pain on the outside is called "Tennis elbow." Golfers can suffer from either... or both.

KNEE PAIN

The act of swinging places tremendous torque on your knees. This stress can damage ligaments and irritate joint cartilage. Plus, walking 9 or 18 holes sometimes exceeds what unconditioned or arthritic joints are prepared to handle.



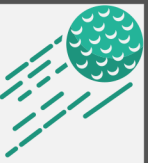
ROTATOR CUFF PROBLEMS

Repeatedly raising your arms during the upswing can pinch sensitive tendons and bursa. Unchecked, small irritations can transition to more significant tears over time.

BACK PAIN

Continually bending forward and quickly rotating places tremendous stress on your spine's soft tissues and joints. Injuries to muscles, ligaments, and discs are common.

Tips



- ✘ Stretch and get some blood flowing with a brisk 10-minute walk before hitting the course.
- ✘ Choose golf shoes with proper arch supports, or consider aftermarket insoles or custom orthotics.
- ✘ Be cautious when lifting your clubs between vehicles and carts. Keep your back straight and use the strength of your legs to lift.
- ✘ Warm-up at the range by simulating a hole or two: i.e., driver / 5 iron / wedge, then driver / 3 wood / 9 iron.
- ✘ Make sure you are well hydrated before, during, and after your game. Replace your fluids, whether you feel thirsty or not. (Alcohol and caffeine don't help.)
- ✘ Avoid overpowering. Swing your club back and forward with a consistent and controlled tempo. Sounds simple, huh?
- ✘ Some mild soreness is acceptable, but don't hesitate to stop in the middle of a round if you experience more significant or sharp pain.



EXERCISES

MANY GOLF-RELATED INJURIES CAN BE PREVENTED WITH PROPER WARM-UP. TRY THESE STRETCHES BEFORE YOUR NEXT ROUND.



CERVICAL PLUS SIGN: Sit or stand, looking forward, with proper posture. Gently and deliberately 'nod' head up and down in a pain free range of motion. Next, from a neutral position, tilt your head toward your shoulder from side to side. *Do not "roll" your head in a circle. Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions twice a day.



UPPER BODY STRETCH: Stand and reach straight up overhead with both arms while grasping a broomstick or golf club. Your hands and feet should both be shoulder-width apart. Slowly rotate your entire body to one side, hold that position for 3-5 seconds, then slowly rotate to the other side. Return to center and bend first to the right and then to left. Repeat as directed.



A-FRAME: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart, knees slightly bent. Bend forward at your hips and reach one extended arm toward the floor. If necessary, you may place your opposite forearm on your knees for support. Slowly twist your trunk to raise your extended arm toward the ceiling. Move your head so that you can watch your arm move from 6 o'clock to 12 o'clock, and then back down again. Repeat as directed.



HIP SWINGS: Stand on one leg and lean slightly forward to place your outstretched hands on a wall, counter, or another stable object at chest level. Swing your free leg in front of you in a brisk "pendulum" motion, aligned with the plane of the wall. Try to keep your low back stable and slightly arched to avoid twisting or slouching. Swing your leg as far as possible in each direction for 10-30 seconds, then repeat on the opposite side.



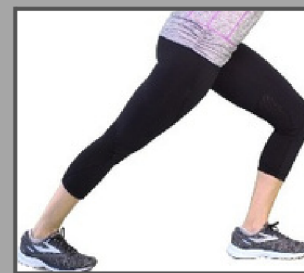
CROSS BODY: While sitting or standing, bring your involved arm across the front of your upper chest as shown in the picture. Hold the affected elbow with your uninvolved arm and gently pull across your chest until a stretch is felt in the back of your shoulder. Relax and stretch the arm further across your body. Perform as directed.



HAMSTRING STRETCH: Stand with your heel propped up on an elevated surface, keeping your knee and back straight as shown in the picture. Slowly lean forward at your hip, not through your back, until a stretch is felt in the hamstring. Contract your hamstring to push your heel downward for seven seconds. Relax and lean forward through your hip to further stretch your hamstring. Keep your knee and back straight throughout this exercise. Perform as directed.



WRIST WAVES: Interlock your fingers then elevate both arms as though you were resting the underside of your forearms on a table at chest level. Your palms should be facing down, elbows out to the side. Begin performing a "wave" by flexing one of your wrists and letting it flow through the opposite wrist. Allow relaxed movement from your wrists, elbows, and shoulders as you perform a smooth wave moving from one arm to the other. Initiate this flowing movement from one hand for 30 seconds, then the other for 30 seconds. Repeat as directed.



CALF STRETCH: Stand facing a wall with your hands on the wall at head level. Your affected leg to be stretched should be back and straight with your heel on the floor. Your unaffected leg may be bent in front of you for support. While keeping your back straight, lean forward until you feel a stretch in your calf. Against the resistance of the floor, attempt to push the toes of your trailing foot into the floor for seven seconds. Do not lift your heel off of the floor. Relax and lean further forward to increase the stretch. "Lock in" to this new position and repeat three contract/relax cycles on each side twice per day.

