



## BACK FACTS: Golf

While golf equipment and advice proliferates, one of the most important success factors can't be found at the pro shop. It's the physical condition of the golfer. After all, back pain and golfer's elbow are two of the most common injuries suffered by golfers.



When you consider the spinal rotation that goes into a golf swing and the fact that the speed of the club can reach 160 km/hour, it's easy to understand that golf puts significant biomechanical stress on the body.

Follow these tips to improve your game and prevent the pain.

1. Every golfer should include strength-training exercises in their routine. Strengthening all major muscle groups is essential to maximizing your performance. Core body strength and flexibility helps breathing and oxygen flow, as well as preventing injury to your back. Muscle is also an important shock absorber that helps prevent strains and sprains.
2. Warm-up and cool-down both before and after your game for a full 20 minutes. Include gentle stretching and range of motion exercises, as well as a brisk walk or gentle jog to loosen the muscles and joints.
3. Stay hydrated. Drink plenty of fluids before, during and after your game. Sorry, beer does not count. Remember that once you are thirsty, you are already starting to dehydrate. Dehydration affects your energy level and your physical functioning.
4. Use a wheeled golf cart for carrying heavy clubs. If you must carry your golf bag, use both shoulder straps. This will spread the weight across a greater area. If there is only one strap, alternate sides frequently. If you find that your bag is getting too heavy, put it down and take a break.
5. When wheeling your golf cart, push rather than pull.
6. Golf requires long periods of standing. Frequently alternate your weight from one foot to the other or rest one of them on your golf bag or cart.
7. Take care of your feet! Make sure you have the proper shoes for your type of feet. Golf shoes with short cleats are the best.
8. Use the right technique for your physical capacity and limits. Adopting a golf swing based on your physical and biomechanical capacity is important. Amateurs are usually better off adopting a classic golf swing, which enables the hips to turn nearly

as much as the shoulders to minimize spinal twisting. If in doubt, consult a golf pro.

9. Lastly, have fun. The right attitude is good for your performance and your overall health!

### **Preventing shoulder injuries**

Shoulder injuries in golfers are common due to the repetitive nature of the swing. To reduce shoulder pain, try these two tips.

- Shorten the backswing slightly. Instead of ending the club head at the 3 o'clock position, stop at the 1 o'clock position.
- Strengthen your shoulder, scapular, chest, and back muscles. Your chest and back muscles are large and generate the power in the swing.

### **Preventing elbow, wrist and hand injuries**

- Select larger and softer club grips and use a neutral grip.
- Select irons with large heads and graphite shafts to lessen vibration.
- Select the correct club length.
- Strengthen your forearm muscles.

### **Canada's chiropractors – here to help**

Chiropractors can help prevent backpack problems by showing you golf exercises and stretches. Should you suffer an injury from golf, a chiropractor can also provide treatment for your pain.

**Fact:** 80 per cent of Canadians will suffer from back pain in their lifetime. If required, a chiropractor can treat your pain through a variety of methods. These can include: spinal and joint adjustment, modalities such as ultrasound or TENS, soft tissue therapy and therapeutic exercises.

For more information or to locate a chiropractor near you, please visit the Canadian Chiropractic Association website [www.chiropracticcanada.ca](http://www.chiropracticcanada.ca).

**Improve your game without the pain.**

**The CANADIAN CHIROPRACTIC ASSOCIATION**

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