



Barrhaven Chiropractic Health Centre

NEWSLETTER

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Preventing Golf Injuries

Golf has become one of the fastest growing recreational sports in North America. Some attribute the growth to our aging population, but there are numerous factors that have contributed to golf's popularity, including; the attraction to all age groups, the ability to play and do business simultaneously, the opportunity to escape the hustle and bustle of urban life, the competitiveness between friends and colleagues and the influence of tour players like Tiger Woods, who has become a household name whether you are a golfer or not.

Regardless of the attraction to the game, golf is a great form of exercise. Although many consider golf a low-level physical activity without the possibility of injury, this simply is not the case. Improper grip, poor swing mechanics and a lack of fitness and flexibility combined with the repetitive motion of swinging the club, are all factors that can lead to injury. Most golf injuries are musculoskeletal, either affecting the joints or soft tissues (tendon, ligaments and muscles) of the spine, shoulder, elbow or wrist. Despite the area of injury, the best form of treatment is prevention. Follow these golf injury prevention tips and hopefully you'll be stroking the ball better without having to grab that ice pack after your round.

1. Take time to warm-up properly before your round
2. Incorporate stretching and strengthening exercises 2-3 times per week, focusing on the core and exercises that imitate the golf swing to help strengthen your back, abdominals, legs, gluts and shoulders.
3. Take lessons to ensure proper swing mechanics.
4. Avoid over-swinging - hyperextension of the spine on follow-through can lead to spinal joint irritation.
5. Maintain a balance between spinal and shoulder rotation to limit excessive twisting and torque in the spine and shoulder.
6. Softer grips, clubs with larger heads, low compression balls and graphite shafts can all help to decrease vibration at impact and prevent wrist and elbow injuries.
7. Strengthening forearm muscles can help build muscle endurance to prevent golfers elbow and/or tennis elbow.
8. Ensure proper lifting techniques when lifting your bag in and out of your car or golf cart and while bending to pick up your golf ball.
9. Backpack style golf bags are easier to carry and better at distributing weight when walking the golf course. Alternatively, use a push cart.
10. Avoid stooping when putting by using a putter with a longer shaft.
11. Consider using spikeless shoes to avoid twisting stress on your knees.
12. Wear good comfortable shoes and consider a custom orthotic to prevent foot, ankle, knees, hip and low back problems.
13. Be aware of signs that your body needs a break and address those signs before the problem escalates.
14. Wear proper clothing, a hat and sunscreen to prevent sunburns.
15. Visiting your chiropractor regularly can help keep your spine aligned and prevent spinal joint irritation.



What's The Deal with Nighttime Calf Cramping?

There is no clear answer as to the exact cause of nighttime calf cramping, but there are numerous theories and logical explanations that have been shown to resolve some of these occurrences. Two common explanations are dehydration and low potassium, magnesium and/or calcium.

Our muscles rely on several minerals to contract, including potassium, magnesium and calcium. A deficiency in any of these minerals causes the nerve endings to become hyper-excitable, triggering contraction of the muscles those nerve endings innervate. You can help boost the levels of those minerals by taking a good multivitamin or better yet, foods such as low-fat yogurt, bananas, spinach, almonds, beans and lentils are all good sources of at least one of the minerals mentioned above.

Any leg cramps that persist, are aggravated with exercise and improved with rest and/or if leg cramps are experienced after a long air flight, you should be examined by a health care practitioner to rule out the possibility of a blood clot.

Vitamin D - The Missing Link

In the past year, the benefits of vitamin D has received so much attention in newspapers, magazines and television, that only the induction of Barack Obama has received more media accolades. While that may be a stretch of my imagination, current research on vitamin D and its effects on our body has been a "hot topic" in the medical world. Current research has implicated vitamin D deficiency as a major factor in the pathology of at least 17 varieties of cancer as well as heart disease, stroke, hypertension, autoimmune diseases, diabetes, depression, chronic pain, osteoarthritis, osteoporosis, muscle weakness, muscle wasting, birth defects, periodontal disease, and more.

Vitamin D is found in many dietary sources such as eggs and fish, but the majority of vitamin D is produced in the body through the absorption of sunlight (UVB) by the skin. Regardless if it is absorbed by the skin or ingested through food, it is brought to the liver where it is metabolized. Once metabolized, there are two main pathways the molecule can choose to follow. The first pathway is the transport of vitamin D from the liver to the kidneys. In the kidneys vitamin D becomes a potent steroid which circulates in the blood to maintain blood calcium and phosphorous levels, which are vital in forming and maintaining healthy bones.

Rickets and osteomalacia are both vitamin D deficiency diseases. Rickets is seen in

children and results in skeletal deformities, whereas, in adults, vitamin D deficiency can lead to osteomalacia, which results in muscular weakness in addition to weak bones. Individuals who are at a higher risk of deficiency include the elderly, dark skinned races, exclusively breastfed infants, obese individuals and those that avoid the sun.

Once Vitamin D stored in the kidney is maximized, then excess vitamin D from the liver will follow the second pathway and be distributed to various tissues in our bodies. This is the pathway that has been researched extensively in the past few years and has labeled vitamin D as a cancer fighter. In the June 2007 issue of the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, researchers found a 60-77% decrease in cancer rates in postmenopausal women who took a daily dose of 1,100 IU of vitamin D combined with calcium over women who were given a placebo or calcium alone. In another study, researchers at the University of California suggested in the March 2007 issue of the American Journal of Preventive Medicine that taking 2,000 IU of vitamin D daily along with 10 to 15 minutes in the sun and a healthy diet could reduce the incidence of colorectal cancer by two-thirds. The same authors found that breast cancer rates were 50 per cent lower in people with high levels of vitamin D in their blood.

While exposure to sun may be the best way to boost vitamin D levels, the Canadian Cancer Society, does not

recommend that people rely solely on increasing their exposure to the sun to boost their levels of vitamin D. For some individuals increasing exposure to the sun by even a few minutes a day could increase the risk of skin cancer. The Canadian Cancer society recommends that people consider a balance of vitamin D supplements, proper nutrition, fortified foods and small amounts of sun exposure to maintain proper levels of the vitamin while keeping risks of skin cancer to a minimum. If you are vitamin D deficient, the Canadian Cancer society recommends talking to your doctor about supplementing with about 1000 IU of vitamin D daily. What is important to note is that too much vitamin D can be harmful, so speak with a health provider before starting any supplementation.



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