



Health News

from Ponte Vedra Wellness Center

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Dr. Erika Hamer, DC, DIBCN, DIBE



Chiropractic Care for Golfers - Part I

What do Tiger Woods, David Duval and more than 75 percent of golfers in the PGA have in common? They all sing the praises of chiropractic. But you don't have to be a professional golfer to benefit from chiropractic. Amateur golfers also reap the performance-boosting rewards of regular chiropractic care.

Throughout the world -- from Scotland to South America - men, women and children of all ages and income levels are hitting the greens. Golf has long been heralded as one of the best ways to exercise the body and relax the mind. As in any sport, however, injuries can occur if you don't take the proper precautions. Golf can be especially hard on the spine, often triggering back disorders. That's why Dr. Hamer teaches patients how to keep their spines up to par

Focus on Posture

Proper posture - both on and off the course - is key to avoiding golf-related injuries and improving your game. For instance, a level backswing is dependent on proper posture. A backswing is actually two motions in one: the up/down movement of the arms and the rotation of the body - both directly dependent on spinal health. That's why a healthy spine is so vital to a golfer's game. If the spine is out of alignment, the swing will be out of alignment. That's also why so many professional and amateur golfers alike schedule regular chiropractic checkups. By correcting a spinal condition called vertebral subluxation, chiropractors help perfect the postures - and golf games - of patients.

Cancel the Cart

Here's a simple way to dramatically improve your fitness level: Choose to walk the course, rather than rent a cart. Walking elevates aerobic activity, increases stamina and boosts immunity: maximizing athletic performance and warding off injury.

Blame the Bag

Although golfers tend to blame back-related problems on suboptimal swings, many golf-related injuries have nothing to do with the actual game, explains Dr. Hamer. Golf bags, by themselves, have substantial bulk and weight. Add to that the maximum number of clubs allowed during course play - a mix of 14 irons and woods along with a dozen or so balls and assorted accessories. The result? Enough weight to cause serious injury. Prevent bag related injuries by asking your doctor of chiropractic to outline proper lifting techniques. In addition, never carry your bag from hole to hole. Instead, invest in a portable, hand-pull cart.



Back in Shape

Low-back injuries are particularly common among golfers. Why does golf generate - and aggravate - low-back pain? According to researchers, the answer is two-fold: poor mechanics and today's more demanding swing. "Stiff hip and back muscles are often the root causes of flawed mechanics. Also, older golfers may have back conditions that the swing aggravates: The disks between the spinal vertebrae get less elastic with the years and, therefore, are less able to distribute the stresses that the swing puts on the back." (Harvard Health Letter 2000;25.)



Exercise of the Week

Exercise 1 - Calf Stretch,

Variation 1

Difficulty: Easy

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

Start: Standing behind a chair or in front of a wall. Place hands on backrest or wall for balance.

Exercise: Bring one foot behind as far as possible, keeping heel on floor and knee straight. You should feel tension behind lower leg, close to knee. Lean hips toward chair or wall to increase lengthening effect. Hold for 30-60 seconds, relaxing muscles of lower leg. Switch sides, and repeat 2X per side.

