



Is your body ready for golf?

Athletes in virtually every sport take part in some sort of pre-season conditioning. Hockey players and football players have training camps while baseball players go to spring training. What about the average golfer?

Most will dust off their clubs within the next few weeks and head straight to the range where they will hit as many balls as humanly possible. They will then proceed to the golf course where they will cram as many games as they can into their schedules until the snow falls.

Unfortunately, many of these golfers are increasing their chances of suffering from chronic pain or an acute injury caused by the demands of playing without any physical preparation. There is no denying the fact that golf is hard on the human body. The repeated forces caused by the golf swing put a lot of stress on joints and muscles that will take their toll as the season progresses.

Thankfully, it's not too late to take the appropriate measures to minimize your chances of suffering the consequences of playing before preparing. Here are a few suggestions of what you can do...

- 1) **Follow a golf-specific training program** – even just a few weeks can be very helpful to gain balance, strength, mobility, flexibility and power. Training should be sport specific – a poorly designed workout program can actually do more harm than good for your game.
- 2) **Take lessons** – a good coach can help you to eliminate swing flaws and ensure you are using the proper equipment which can both be to blame for injuries resulting from biomechanical compensations you may be making as you swing.
- 3) **Start slowly** – hitting balls until your arms fall off or playing 54 holes per day is not the best way to improve and is too much of a shock to your body.
- 4) **Go for walks** – get your body accustomed to the workload of walking.
- 5) **Warm-up properly** – spending 5 minutes doing dynamic stretches before you practice or play allows your body to function more optimally before you take your first swing.
- 6) **Cool Down** – spend a few minutes after your round (or practice session) stretching or using a foam roller to help your body recover and perform better.

The vast majority of injuries suffered by golfers are preventable – don't let your season be cut short by failing to prepare your body for the physical demands of playing golf.

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