

Use proper mechanics in golf swing to prevent low-back pain

Question: Could my golf swing be the cause of my low-back pain? When I am not playing golf my low back is mildly achy, but after 18 holes I am hurting for weeks.

Answer: There aren't any golfers that are immune to low-back pain at some time. Every professional golfer, including Tiger Woods, has had a period of low-back problems. The PGA provides chiropractors and/or massage therapists at almost all events and many professionals have their own chiropractors attend the events.

The reason there is such a high abundance of low-back symptoms with golfers is because the basic swing requires the combination of bending, lifting and twisting at the same time. Our low backs are not designed for this type of repetitive movement. The lateral joints attached to the vertebra, called facets, are supposed to only move in one direction at a time. The lumbar muscles that attach and support the facets help assist or compensate for the additional motions placed upon them. A perfectly performed swing can minimize the stress on the facets, discs and muscles of the low back. I have been golfing for 25 years as a part-time or weekend warrior, which accounts for about 90-percent of the golfers out there, and the majority of golfers I have observed have atrocious swings, including myself. When our body mechanics are distorted or imbalanced we overtax the low-back joints and muscles surrounding them. Add a bad shot

that pounds the earth or a follow through into a branch or rock that jolts the spine and you will suffer for it.

The solution to preventing low-back pain as a golfer is preparation. A series of full-body stretching and pre-swinging is essential. The upper body as well as the low back and legs should be warmed up. Special attention should be given to the hamstrings muscles, which when irritated, can lead to sciatica and other problems. Have a professional instructor observe your golf swing to determine if there are adjustments you can make to reduce stress on your spine and any other body structures. Have yourself video taped in slow motion as you move through all phases of your golf swing. Self-observation is a very powerful tool. Should your back pain or symptoms persist, absolutely see your chiropractor immediately. The best policy to prevent low-back pain while golfing is to visit your chiropractor before injuries occur to maintain the healthiest posture possible.

Quote of the week: *“Take each day and relish each moment. Take each bad day and work to make it good.”* – Lisa Dado