



A Prescription for Safe Golfing

Courtesy of:

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Although golf isn't thought of as a high-risk sport, if you're unprepared or practise bad habits, you can easily encounter injuries. Take a few moments to review these tips and stretches before you hit the links. They'll loosen you up and increase your range of motion - adding distance to your shots and lowering your risk of injury.

Tee-Off in Top Form

1. If you're trying golf for the first time, take a few lessons to learn the basics of the game. Proper body positioning, good posture and a correct golf swing will help you avoid potential injury.
2. Use clubs that are the right fit for your body type, your ability and flexibility. A leather golf glove or good tacky grips on your clubs can give you a more secure but relaxed grip.
Your grip on the club shaft should exert no more pressure than what you would use to squeeze a tube of toothpaste. A grip that is too tight can lead to strained hand, forearm and shoulder muscles. Talk to a pro to make sure you are on the right track.
3. Warm up with 5 minutes of gentle stretching before you hit any balls. This is so important and often overlooked by many golfers! Use the stretches illustrated on the opposite side of this page to prevent strain and fatigue in the most vulnerable muscles.

Know The Hazards

If you have any of the following symptoms, stop playing to avoid putting further stress on the injured area:

1. Pain caused by lifting your arm above your head: this may be "shoulder impingement" or inflammation at one of the tendons at the shoulder.
2. Pain at the inside of the elbow, caused by wrist or elbow movements: this could be "golfer's elbow" or inflammation of a tendon at the elbow.
3. Pain in the upper, mid or lower back with twisting movements, prolonged sitting or standing: this could be back strain caused by an overzealous golf swing.

Practise the Right Follow Through

If you think you may have injured yourself:

1. Apply ice and rest the sore area.
2. Take time to gently stretch out stiff and tight muscles.
3. Try a warm bath or shower to provide some relief.
4. Pain that lasts longer than a few days with rest is not normal. You should contact your doctor and/or physiotherapist.

Suggested Stretches:

Golf's most important minutes should be spent at the first tee. Stretching slowly and carefully will not only help you to relax and prepare physically for playing, it will give you an opportunity to focus mentally on your game. Do the following stretches until you feel a slight, easy stretch and hold for up to 30 seconds.

Arms, Shoulders & Forearms

1. Hold onto your golf club with both hands. Slowly raise both arms, shoulder width apart over your head and allow your arms to go back behind your head. You should feel the stretch across the front of your chest, shoulders and down your arms. Repeat 2-3 times.



2. Stand with your knees slightly bent in your ready-to-hit position (as though you are at the top of your swing). Gently pull your left elbow with your right hand towards your right shoulder as you rotate your hip into your hitting position. Feel the stretch at the back of your shoulder and upper back.



3. With your elbow straight out in front of you, palm facing upwards, gently pull your fingers back with your other hand. A comfortable stretch should be felt on the inside of the forearm. Hold, then repeat on the other arm. In addition to this, with your elbow straight and your palm facing down, gently pull your hand towards you with your other hand, until you feel a gentle tension on the top of your forearm. Hold, then repeat on the other arm.



Legs, Calves & Hips

1. Stretch your calf by leaning against a solid support with your forearms. Place one leg forward, bending from the knee with foot flat. Leave the other leg straight, behind you. Slowly move your hips forward until you feel the stretch in the calf muscle of your straight leg. Stretch out your other calf the same way.



2. Support yourself using a fence or tree. Grasp the top of your left foot with your right hand and gently pull, your heel moving towards your buttocks. Your knee should bend in this position and create a good stretch in your knee and quads. Do the same stretch for the other side.



Trunk and Back

1. Hold a club behind your back. Slowly pull it up with your top hand until you feel a stretch in the shoulder of your lower arm. Your bottom arm should be relaxed. Hold for 10 seconds and then pull the club down with your bottom hand until you feel a stretch in the your top shoulder. Change hands and repeat.
2. Hold a club positioned between your elbows behind your back. While keeping your feet shoulder width apart and knees slightly bent, gently rotate your trunk to one side until you feel a stretch. Hold briefly, repeating 2-3 times in each direction.



For more information contact:

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