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How To Enjoy Golf Without Hurting Your Lower Back

By Sean Cochran

The golf swing, lower back, and injury are common phrases in the world of golf. It is understood that the

golf swing places large amounts of stress on the lower back. This is simply a result of the mechanics of the golf swing itself. The execution of the golf swing places the lower back under immense shear forces each and every golf swing, and the muscles of the lower back must withstand these shear forces. Muscles of the body when under stress from physical activity eventually become fatigued. Once the lower back muscles are fatigued, supporting the stressors of the golf swing and executing the mechanics of the golf swing are compromised. Resulting in some very common situations for the golfer.

Again, we are all aware that the lower back is one of the most often injured areas of the body in the game of golf. Statistics indicate approximately 50% of all golfers will incur a lower back injury during their playing careers. This statistic tells us a great deal about the importance of keeping the lower back healthy in the game of golf. Outside of the lower back becoming injured from the golf swing.

The situation of performance on the golf course comes into play. Often times prior to injury occurring, a drop in performance will occur. This is a result of the fatigue within the lower back not allowing the mechanics of the golf swing to be executed correctly.

On the PGA Tour keeping the lower back strong and injury free is a daily task. It is understandable how much time is spent on lower back injury prevention when the biomechanics of the golf swing are understood. The biomechanics of the golf swing place the lower back under large amounts of shear force/stress every time you swing a golf club.

Over time, this can easily cause injury if you do not take the correct steps. This leads me to e-mail I received a little while back from BioForce subscriber Bryan

He wrote in with a question about his lower back and here is what he had to say;

"Sean,

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I am 54 years of age and a very keen golfer. Lately I have been experiencing back pain, maybe because of too much golfing? I need your kind experience to advise me on this subject so that I can enjoy golf without any harm to my back."

Thank You, Bryan

First and foremost the reasons for lower back pain is numerous and is best identified by a qualified physician.

My first suggestion is to get the lower back checked out by a back specialist. This will determine what exactly is going on with the lower back and what is the best treatment.

Now Bryan brings up a very good point in his e-mail. He discusses the possibility that his lower back discomfort is caused by playing too much golf. (you can never play enough golf!, well...maybe) This

absolutely could be the reason why his lower back is "tight" and "sore".

Again, we know the lower back is placed under high amounts of stress every single swing of the golf club. Over time the muscles of the lower back can become fatigued from the golf swing. This will eventually lead to the muscles of the lower back "giving up" and becoming fatigued.

Once the muscles of the lower back are fatigued it is a very short step to injury. What is the process of eliminating this type of scenario playing out?

It simply requires the development of muscular endurance in the lower back to withstand the stressors of the golf swing. Bottom line the golf swing is a repetitive movement, requiring the body to perform the swing over and over again. In order for the muscles (lower back muscles included) involved in the golf swing to perform the repeatable movements of the golf swing over and over again in an efficient manner.

Muscular endurance is the ability of the neuromuscular system of the body to perform a repetitive biomechanical movement (i.e. golf swing) without becoming fatigued. How do you develop muscular endurance specific to the golf swing? By simply, implementing golf fitness exercises into a structured program.

In addition to the development of increased muscular endurance the efficiency of the golf swing mechanics may require adjustment. Efficiency within the mechanics of the golf swing can directly affect the amount of stress placed upon the lower back.

Additional research has indicated the shear forces placed upon the lower back of a professional golfer is significantly less than the amateur golfer. The reason for the difference is the mechanics of the golf swing performed by the professional is much more efficient, placing less stress on the lower back.

Stated previously, numerous reasons exist for the lower back to become injured. The mechanics of the golf swing and endurance with muscles of the lower back are only two of many possibilities. If the lower

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back is weak the shear forces placed upon it by the golf swing will eventually lead to fatigue. The development of higher levels of muscular endurance can counter act this situation. The utilization of golf fitness exercises is best in relation to the golf swing for this situation.

Additionally, the efficiency in which the mechanics of the golf swing are executed affects the lower back. A less efficient golf swing places higher levels of shear force upon the musculature of the lower back causing fatigue and possible injury. A comprehensive golf fitness program to develop higher levels of muscular endurance and the creation of a efficient golf swing golf through instruction may assist keeping your lower back injury free.

Sean Cochran

Sean Cochran is one of the most recognized golf fitness instructors in the world today. He travels the PGA Tour regularly with 2004 Masters, 2005 PGA, and 2006 Masters Champion Phil Mickelson. He has made many of his golf tips, golf instruction and golf swing improvement techniques available to amateur golfers on the website

<http://www.bioforcegolf.com>

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The Best Way To Eliminate Lower Back Injuries In Golf

By Sean Cochran

One out of every two golfers will incur a lower back injury during their playing careers, are you one of them?

Almost every golfer on the planet has at some time or another felt their lower back "tighten" up on the course, after a round, or even getting out of bed. Why is this so? The reason for the high number of lower back injuries in the sport of golf is a result of the golf swing itself!

The golf swing is a rotational movement. It requires you to rotate around a fixed spine. The lower back takes the brunt of the pressure of the twisting and turning.

The rotation and torque can make your lower back very easily fatigued or injured. The question to ask is how to counteract the stresses placed on the lower back?

There are a number of ways to help you "dodge the injury bullet" when it comes to the lower back.

Lower back injuries generally occur because of three different reasons.

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1. Poor Swing Mechanics

2. Weak Lower Back Muscles

3. Workloads

The first category has to do with your swing mechanics.

A research study (don't quote me on the exact %) indicated that the rate of lower back injuries in the amateur golfer was 60% higher than professionals in the sport. The study determined the number was statically higher in amateurs because of the shear forces created in the golf swing.

The amount of shear forces created in the amateur's golf swing was exponentially higher than the professional. Professionals have a much more efficient golf swing, lowering the shear forces placed upon the lower back compared to the typical amateur.

The second category refers to the physical aspect of the golf swing.

The lower back is used extensively in order to swing the golf club properly. If the lower back is weak, over time it will become fatigued. Once the muscles of the lower back become fatigued, the ability to swing the club with the same force becomes much more difficult. Additionally, once the lower back is tired, and you continue to perform the movements of the golf swing. The lower back will become sore and eventually you will injure it.

The final reason golfers tend to have many lower back injuries is workloads.

Simply put, workloads are the number of swings you take within a certain time frame. For example, a

PGA Tour player during a competitive week on Tour may swing a club well over 1,000 times. This is the total number of swings over a 7 day period can be defined as the Tour players workloads for that week.

A lower back injury can incur if the workloads for any golfer become too high. Regardless of the efficiency within the golf swing mechanics or the strength of the lower back, too high of a workload will lead to injury. For example, if you were to go to the range and execute 1,000 swings of the golf club in a 3-hour time frame. The likelihood of a lower back injury is very high. Why? Because the workloads are too high within the given time frame for any golfer!

The key in regards to workloads is to match up the efficiency of your golf swing and the strength within the lower back. If you have poor golf swing mechanics and a weak lower back, your workloads should be very low. If you have moderately efficient golf swing mechanics and a fairly strong lower back. The workloads can be higher.

What is the best way to avoid a lower back injury?

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Simple, it is a 3–step process.

Number one; develop efficient golf swing mechanics. This can be done through proper instruction, practice, and time.

Number two; implement a golf fitness program into your exercise routine. This type of program will strengthen your lower back in relation to the golf swing.

Number three; monitor the number of swings you make with the club in relation to points one and two.

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