

## Golf Injuries

The most common golf injuries occur in the lower back, elbows, shoulders, hands and wrists. Injuries can occur during golf as a result of overuse or trauma to a region. The impact and stress of repetitive motion of the golf swing is sometimes hard on the muscles and joints; especially if you ignore the early warning signs of an injury such as joint pain, swelling, point tenderness, decreased range of motion, weakness or numbness and tingling.

The best way to avoid an injury is to ensure golf specific exercise conditioning and correct golf swing mechanics. In general, a professional golfer has more overuse injuries due to hours of practice while amateurs are more likely to get injured due to their lack of conditioning and poor swing mechanics. The top reasons golfers get injured include:

- Insufficient warm up
- Overuse
- Mis-hits (eg. hitting the ground during the swing)
- Poor swing mechanics
- Over-swinging
- Incorrect Grip
- Twisting the Spine During the Swing

## Back

Common back problems involve strains to the muscles and ligaments that support a joint. Sometimes the pain can come from the disc or joint itself. Back pain can also occur as a result of injuries to the hip muscles and/or hip joint. Back pain in golfers can arise due to inadequate warm-up, tight and restricted back range of motion, twisting the spine during the swing (in particular at the top of the swing and at impact) and overuse. In some instances the cause of the back pain may be linked to what the golfer is doing when away from the golf course, such as poor or prolonged sitting, prolonged standing, poor sleeping posture and incorrect lifting technique.

Treatment for muscle tightness and trigger points in the back is best relieved by Trigger Point Dry Needling (TDN). TDN involves the use of a fine filament needle inserted into the trigger point to 'de-activate' it. A controlled pistoning effect on the needle causes the muscle to elicit a local twitch response. This twitch is felt like a small momentary muscle cramp. Following this cramp like sensation the muscle relaxes and the tension is released, thereby restoring a better balance and muscle tension. TDN is commonly used to treat golfers injuries as it has been found to be very effective in restoring function and reducing pain.

## Upper Limb Injuries: Shoulder, Elbow, Wrist and Hand



There are many injuries that can occur during or after a round of golf that can affect the upper limb. The muscles, tendons and ligaments that hold each joint together need to work in unison during the golf swing to avoid undue stress or impingement of structures. Some of the common injuries that can occur as a result of the golf swing include:

**Shoulder Tendinitis** - Shoulder tendonitis is inflammation of the rotator cuff and/or biceps tendon. This is often a result of the tendon being pinched by the surrounding structures during the golf swing.

**Impingement Syndrome** - When the rotator cuff tendon becomes inflamed and thickened, it may get trapped causing impingement. This can occur from the repeated motion of the arms during the golf swing, in particular at the top of the swing and during the follow through.

**Shoulder Bursitis** - Tendinitis and impingement syndrome are often accompanied by inflammation of the bursa – called bursitis.

**Torn Rotator Cuff** - A common symptom of a rotator cuff injury is aching, and weakness in the shoulder when the arm is lifted overhead. Golfers may also notice less power at the top of the swing and a loss of control during the follow through.

**Bursitis of the Elbow** - The most common elbow pain in golfers, it occurs over time from repeated use of the muscles of the arm and forearm.

**Golfer's Elbow (Medial Epicondylitis)** - The most common elbow pain in golfers, it occurs over time from repeated use of the muscles of the arm and forearm.

**Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis)** - Yes, tennis elbow can unfortunately occur in golfers! Related to Golfer's Elbow, it also occurs over time from repeated use of the muscles of the arm and forearm. Both golfers and tennis elbow can be aggravated by incorrect grip, poor contact with the ball at impact causing jarring and incorrect swing mechanics.

There could be other causes of shoulder pain such as a frozen shoulder, instability of the shoulder joint or arthritic conditions. Neck pain can also cause referral of pain to the shoulders, back, elbow, forearm, wrist and hand.

A very effective treatment for the above listed golfers injuries is Trigger Point Dry Needling. There are many therapists now trained in this technique, for a list of qualified Dry Needlers please ['click here'](#).

Upper limb injuries in golfers can arise due to inadequate warm-up, overuse of the shoulder muscles (eg. playing 2 days in a row) or mis-hitting the ball causing jarring of the joints. Poor swing mechanics can also result in overuse of some muscle groups and stress on the supporting structures such as the ligaments and tendons resulting in shoulder, elbow and wrist pain. Often the golf swing requires a swing analysis by a trained golf professional to correct the swing mechanics. Incorrect grip can also cause wrist and arm pain – again, something to be checked by your golf professional.

Outside factors contributing to upper limb pain include poor postures adopted at work such as sitting at that computer workstation all day with the head and neck bend incorrectly, overuse of upper limb muscles caused by too much computer mouse use or cradling the phone between the ear and shoulder. Other outside factors contributing to pain on the golf course include slumping on the couch or in the car in the evening, incorrect lifting around the house or previous neck injury causing referral of pain to the shoulder and arm.

In all cases a thorough assessment by a Therapist is recommended to assess all the contributing factors to your pain.