

Par For The Course

Over the years, I have treated an increasing number of injuries associated with golfing. Being an avid golfer myself, I recognise the mental and physical demands of the game that calls for nimbleness, coordination, posture and strength.

Poor swing postures or patterns could contribute to golfing-related injuries especially to the back, neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist and fingers. These injuries could compromise your swing and distance on the greens, disrupting your game.

It is important to listen to your body and consult a doctor if you experience any nagging pain or discomfort during the game or on a regular basis when it affects your day-to-day activities.

Surgery is never the first option. In most cases, rest, anti-inflammatory medications, platelet rich plasma (PRP) or cortisone injections, physiotherapy, infrared or ultrasound therapies are the recommended treatments.



Symptoms and Treatments of Common Golfing-Related Injuries

Upper limbs injuries are common amongst golfers due to the fast moving golf club accompanied with a relatively wide range of motion during the golf swing.

1. Rotator Cuff Impingement

Symptom: Pain in the shoulder or upper arm during a golf swing, and when raising the arm overhead.

Treatment: Physiotherapy.

2. Tennis' Elbow or Golfer's Elbow

Symptom: Pain experienced at the muscles of the forearm and the left elbow. This is usually due to tight club grip, overexertion, or hitting the club on the ground.

Treatment: Rest and apply icing. Regular stretches and forearm strengthening are essential. Other recommendations include cortisone injection, modification to your grip or swing and using a tennis elbow brace.

3. Tendinopathy

Symptom: Wrist pain due to overexertion.

Treatment: Rest, anti-inflammatory medication, body strengthening exercises and stretches. Refine your swing.

4. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Symptoms: Numbness and tingling sensations on the fingers, weakness of your hands.

Treatment: Rest, medication, splinting and surgery if required.

5. Back Pain at the Lower Lumbar Spine

Symptom: Pain of various sites in the lower back.

Treatment: Physiotherapy and in rare cases, surgery.

Play it Safe on the Greens

1. Refine your swing
 - Be mindful of your posture before and during your swing. Stand shoulder-width apart and ensure that your weight is evenly distributed. Avoid hunching over the ball as it may cause neck and back strain. A good posture will heighten your performance.
 - Have a smooth swing and not over-emphasize specific muscle groups or body areas.
 - Relax and have a nice, easy swing at the ball.
2. Don't skip warming up and cooling down exercises. They help to prepare and condition your body.
3. Have a slow and steady start to the game to condition your body to the game.
4. Do strength training all year round to improve your club speed.
5. Stretch regularly to improve your range motion for a smoother swing.
6. Schedule regular aerobic activity to build up stamina and endurance.
7. Uses proper lifting techniques, i.e. keeping the back straight and use the strength of your legs to lift and carry your clubs.
8. Have proper footwear on.

This article is written by Dr Andrew Quoc Dutton. Dr Dutton is a USA fellowship-trained consultant orthopaedic surgeon. He has subspecialty interests in arthroscopic/keyhole and sports surgery, knee and hip replacements, cartilage regeneration and stem cell therapeutics in orthopaedics.

Dr Dutton has been in clinical practice for the past 17 years after graduating from the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He then worked at the Prince of Wales Hospital and St. George Hospital in Sydney. He completed his subspecialty training

and was on staff at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School, USA.

Dr Dutton has worked with the Singapore Sports Council and has treated some of Singapore's national elite athletes of various sports such as football, badminton, basketball and netball. He was an official physician during the 2010 Summer Youth Olympic Games hosted in Singapore.

In 2003, Dr Dutton won the Singapore Young Investigator Award for his work on stem cells therapy for the knee. Dr Dutton has obtained

several government research grants for cartilage repair and bone graft applications. Dr Dutton is one of the few orthopaedic surgeons in South-East Asia able to perform stem cell therapeutics in orthopaedics.

Dr Dutton regularly gives lectures around the region and has trained many orthopaedic surgeons from the various South-East Asian countries.

