

Get in the Game Without the Pain

As warmer weather approaches, golfers can't wait to get to the first tee. But twisted postures, the torque of the swing and forgetting to warm up can cause unnecessary injury.

Simple stretches

Here are a few easy stretching techniques that can help you get in the game without pain. For help developing a warm-up and stretching routine that's right for you, consult your chiropractor.

Side bending stretch:

1. Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Hold the golf club above your head with your arms straight.
3. Slowly bend to one side, without rotating, until you feel a stretch in the side of your back.
4. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat twice for each side.



Quadriceps stretch:

1. Using a golf club for balance, bend your right knee and hold your right foot with your right hand. Keep your thighs together, and your right knee pointing toward the ground.
2. Pull your abdominal muscles in and maintain a straight back.
3. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat two times for each side.



Knee to chest stretch:

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Using both hands, pull one knee into your chest.
3. Hold for 30 seconds.
4. Repeat with the other knee.

Back of the shoulder stretch:

1. Place your right hand on your left shoulder.
2. Gently pull your right elbow across your body toward your left shoulder.
3. Hold for 15 seconds and repeat on the other side.

Shoulder stretch:

1. Hold the shaft of a golf club vertically behind your back.
2. Gently pull the club up with your top hand until you feel a slight stretch in the shoulder of your lower arm. Hold for 15 seconds.
3. Gently pull the club down with your bottom hand until you feel a stretch in the top shoulder and arm.
4. Hold for 15 seconds.
5. Reverse hand positions and repeat.



Hamstring stretch:

(Avoid this stretch if you have back problems.)

1. Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Reach your hands to the sky.
3. Then, bending at the waist, reach toward your toes.

Forearm stretch:

1. With your arm straight out in front of you and palm facing upward, gently pull your fingers back with your other hand. Do not let your shoulder rise up.
2. Next, with your arm straight out in front of you and your palm facing down, point your hand to the ground. Gently pull the back of this hand toward you with your other hand.
3. Hold each position for 15 seconds and repeat with other arm.



If you experience back pain that lasts more than two or three days, call your chiropractor for an evaluation. To find a chiropractor near you, go to www.chiropractic.on.ca.

Squat:

(Avoid this stretch if you have knee problems.)

1. Start from a standing position with your feet shoulder-width apart.
2. Squat down, trying to keep your heels flat on the ground.
3. Hold for 30 seconds.



What is a chiropractor?

Chiropractors are regulated primary health care providers, like medical doctors, dentists and optometrists.

In Canada, chiropractors are required to complete a minimum of three years of university, followed by four intensive years of training at an accredited chiropractic college. Their training enables them to assess, diagnose and treat disorders related to the spine, nervous system and joints.

Chiropractors work to help you stay active and can prescribe therapeutic exercises to help you increase your strength and improve your range of motion. Many high-performance athletes, including professional golfers, rely on chiropractic care to help keep them in the game.

What is chiropractic?

One of the largest primary-contact health care professions in Ontario, chiropractic is a non-invasive, hands-on health care discipline that focuses on the neuromusculoskeletal system.

For many conditions, such as lower back pain, chiropractic care is frequently the primary method of treatment and, where other conditions exist, chiropractic care may complement or support medical treatment by relieving the neuromusculoskeletal problems associated with the condition.

Visit the Ontario Chiropractic Association's website, www.chiropractic.on.ca for more information or to find a chiropractor near you.

Pain shouldn't be par for the course

Get the right fit: Playing with clubs that don't fit can hinder your game and cause you pain. Consult a pro to ensure your clubs are the right height, are made of a material appropriate to your arm strength, and have the right grip for you.

Take lessons: The right swing technique can do more than just improve your game, it can also spare you plenty of unnecessary pain. Working with a CPGA professional is a great way to learn the basics.

Warm up and warm down: Take a few minutes to stretch before and after your game. Start with a brisk walk, then do some light stretching.

Push, don't carry, your golf bag: Pushing or pulling your bag and taking turns riding in a cart can help you prevent a back injury. If you prefer to carry your clubs, use a double-strap carry bag that evenly distributes the weight.

Choose the right shoes: Wearing a golf shoe with good support and the proper fit can prevent some knee, hip and lower back pain.

Drink lots of water: Dehydration can cause fatigue and increase your risk of injury. Water and juice are ideal refreshments. Drinking alcohol depletes the body's fluids and can lead to stiff muscles and soreness.

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