

PROVIDENCE ATHLETIC MEDICINE NEWSLETTER

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Golf Back Pain

Jeannine Hurst MS, LAT



Golf season is upon us, which means back pain is sure to follow. Back pain is the number one complaint amongst golfers. There are many factors contributing to this scenario; Poor technique, poor flexibility, improper warm up, weak core strength, rotational forces placed on the spine, and of course the fact that golfers will spend 4-5 hours in a bent over stance.

This article will concentrate on the flexibility aspect of golfers back pain. A common mistake is to only stretch the low back. Consider the flexibility of your hamstrings, hips, shoulders and upper back as well. If any of these areas are tight they will tend to place greater stress on your back. The domino effect applies. For example tight hamstrings will create more pull at the back musculature when standing in a bent over stance, tight hip rotators create greater rotation at the back during follow through. Eliminate additional stresses placed on the back by stretching all other areas connected to the low back. A good overall stretching program is recommended.

Table of Contents

Golfers back pain p.1

Youth sports and parents
p.2

How to stretch

Prior to activity warm up properly. Walk for 5-15 minutes to create increased blood flow. Take some light practice swings prior to teeing off. Perform dynamic stretching. Dynamic stretches involve sport specific movements. These movements should be pain free and gradually progressed, holding only 2—3 seconds at the end range. Start with a limited range of motion and gradually increase to the point of full range of motion.

Stretching *after* golf is very important. At this stage static stretching should be performed. This is the more traditional technique of holding a stretch for 30 seconds. These need to be performed immediately following a round of golf when the muscles are warm. Do not wait until you get home at that point the muscles have cooled down.

A proper warm up and flexibility routine will help decrease back pain this golf season. A personalized flexibility program to meet your needs can be developed with the help of your Sports Medicine Physician.

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Youth Sports and the Parents

Victor Faris M.D.

Sports parents have a big impact on their young superstars. A healthy and successful sports experience will depend on sports parents' ability to instill confidence and self-esteem in athletes. Youth sports are huge in today's society. Coaches and parents have a tremendous impact on how children will engage in sports. In 2006, CNN reported that, "Sports are a wonderful vehicle for kids to learn how to deal with adversity, the sense of learning how to master skills," said Rick Wolff, chairman of the Center for Sports Parenting and a former professional baseball player and coach. "For example, if they're learning how to dribble a basketball first with one hand then with another, [it] gives them a sense of accomplishment." And experts say children can also learn some valuable life lessons, if their parents stay on the sidelines. Ultimately, parents want to see their child succeed in the sport they play and in life. Parental behavior can have an impact on both.



Below are eight simple guidelines for sports parents to adopt with youth athletes:

1. The primary goal should be to have fun and enjoy the healthy competition.
2. Your own agenda is not your child's. Young athletes compete in sports for many reasons that include development of a healthy level of competition, engaging with peers in a social environment and become part of a team.
3. Emphasize a mental focus on the process of execution instead of results or trophies. Teach your child to focus on the process of the challenge of playing one shot, stroke, or race at a time instead of the number of wins or trophies.
4. You are a role model for your child athlete. As such, the parent's demeanor on the sidelines should include poise, composure and contain a healthy level of support. Staying calm, composed and in control on the sidelines will increase the chance your child will mimic those positive behaviors.
5. Refrain from game-time coaching. During competition, it's time to just let them play.



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Too much coaching or over-coaching can lead to confusion and mistakes during the game. Practice time is over and the saying, "just do it" should prevail.

6. Help your athlete to detach self-esteem from achievement. Too many children attach self worth to level of performance. Children should understand that they are people first and then athletes, and not the reverse.
7. Ask the right question after competition. Asking questions like, "Did you win?" will tell your child winning is most important. Questions such as, "Did you have fun?" will tell your child that enjoyment during the sport is truly the most important part of playing.
8. Pledge the: P.A.Y.S. Parent's Code of Ethics. PAYS (Parents Association for Youth Sports) provides a parental handbook and code of ethics that adults must sign before each competitive season. This is a great tool to guide parents.

Following these simple rules will ensure your child will develop a healthy level of competition, along with having fun in whatever sport they enjoy.

Dr. Faris is a Family Medicine Physician completing his Sports Medicine Fellowship at Providence Athletic Medicine.

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