

STAY HEALTHY WITH GOOD POSTURE AND A BALANCED SPINE

By ALAN C. BERGER, D.C.

Playing the game of golf is not the ideal movement of the spine. Golfers notoriously have the highest incidence of back injury of any professional athlete. In one review by Callaway & Jake of injuries on the 1985-1986 PGA tournament 230 of 300 professional golfers were injured (an incidence of 77%). Of the total injuries 43.8% were related to the spine; 42.4% were lumbosacral¹. Therefore, it is critical that we maintain proper posture by reducing the amount of stress on our backs.

Maintaining good posture through a round of golf is extremely important to the prevention of back injury, it allows us to make good swings through the ball.

Most amateurs and some professionals, when we get to the end of a round, our backs fatigue. We eventually become very narrow in our shoulders and our pectoral muscles come together, thus creating more exertion on the lumbar spine (lower back). This faulty postural position at address, known as “hunch back”, increases the risk of back injury. Too much weight exerted on our lumbar spine because we are not using other muscle groups: gluteals, quadriceps, and hamstrings. Hunch back leads to a poor golf swing as the club is forced inside instead of allowing us to take it straight back.

Considering that golfers suffer mainly with mechanical pain (nocioceptive pain), chiropractors are the best equipped to deal with this problem.

Chiropractic deals with the nervous system via the spine. Generally, the joints of the spine move in six different planes of motion. This allows you to make a swing. Performing an assymetrical torsion type motion on the spine can cause fixations and locking of the joints of the spine. This will lead to abnormal mechanics of the spine. Poor mechanics of the spine may result in an injury and not an optimal swing. Over a period of time this can result in faulty acquired postural positions.

Chiropractors take care of these mechanical and postural problems of the spine through gentle adjustments and aggressive rehabilitation program. The rehabilitation program should focus the lumbar spine, abdominals, quadriceps/hamstrings, and gluteals. This type of program will minimize your injuries to the lumbar spine and elminate fatigue toward the end of a round.

¹ Rehabilitation of the spine, Liebenson.

² Back pain in golfers; etology and prevention, Seamea DS

Dr. Alan Berger, a 9 handicapp, has worked with many golfers in treating and preventing spinal injuries. If you would like to get in touch with him, you can reach him at 212-532-5993, Email DrAlanBerger@juno.com.