



Brendan Doyle shows his nephew Keegan how to properly swing a golf club.

Swing Into Spring

After a long brutal Chicago winter, golfers of all ages will be eager to get back out and start playing again. The sport of golf is a passion for many and one of few sports that can be enjoyed for an entire lifetime. As the season begins, golfers of all ages must return to practicing the fundamentals and conditioning on and off the course. This will help reduce injury, improve technique, and make the overall experience more enjoyable for years to come.

There is a false notion that because golf is non-contact, it is a low-impact sport with no injuries. However, in 2013 approximately 60 percent of professional, and more than 40 percent of amateur golfers, suffered injuries. More than half of those



Doyle practices a golf exercise, a stimulated resisted downswing on Keiser performance equipment, at The Lake Barrington Field House.

injuries were lower back related. Even the smallest physical injury should not be overlooked. It can affect other aspects of the game because of the long lasting mental frustration. Golf is a deceptive sport because the golf swing generates considerable compressive, shear, and rotational mechanical force on the spine. When physical constraint occurs this impacts both the physical and mental aspects of the game.

Consider the following:

1. Golf places a large amount of physical demand on the spine and musculoskeletal systems.
2. Swinging generates tremendous compressive and shear forces on the lumbar spine. The co-

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activation of the spinal muscles occurs in twisting which can increase penalty on the lumbar spine. This twisting of the transverse plane can create a rotational force of four to five times the load!

3. Compression loads of eight times one's body weight has been recorded while swinging. This is comparable to a Division I offensive lineman hitting a block sled.

GETTING BACK IN THE SWING OF THINGS

Many golfers assume they can pick up where they left off after a long cold winter. This mentality often leads to injuries that may have been avoidable with a few key understandings. First, begin with a proper warm up and dynamic stretches (squats, leg swings, arm circles, neck turns, weighted club swings, etc.). Second, and most importantly, return to the fundamentals: posture and grip. An athletic golf swing starts with good posture, slight knee bend, and hips and butt back. Bend from the hips with the lower spine straight, upper back slightly rounded, and arms just hanging (not reaching). Next, a solid grip is mandatory to swing properly and safely. A fundamentally sound

grip ensures the hinge of the wrists, which allows the release of the club during impact. Your local golf professional can help you with both grip and posture.


GOLF CONDITIONING EXERCISES

Besides good sound fundamentals during practice, golf conditioning exercises should be incorporated into a golfer's exercise routine.

Here are a few to get started:

1. Rotational Exercises
 - A. Torso Rotations (wood choppers) with cable resistance
 - B. Medicine ball side throws
 - C. Seated Russian Twists with the weight of medicine ball
2. Lower Back Strengthening
 - A. Plank on the ground or a Swiss Ball
 - B. Abdominal Roller or wheel
 - C. Superman rises
3. Balance Exercises
 - A. Bosu Ball Squats (ball up or down, single or double leg)
 - B. Balance Boards

C. Any combination of movements on a single leg

Golf is the sport of a lifetime that everyone should get to experience. The mental and physical exercise is both challenging and enjoyable, but injury can quickly lead to a frustrating and negative experience. So prepare for this golf season with exercises that increase your balance, strength, and flexibility. The results will be positive on and off the course. 



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