

To avoid golf injuries, get your wrist in gear

April 7 2017, by Dipali Pathak

If you are looking to improve your golf game this spring, be sure to watch your... wrist. According to a hand and wrist expert at Baylor College of Medicine, wrist injuries are one of the most common types of golf injuries.

"The wrist plays a critical role in transmitting force from the body to the club and then to the ball," said Dr. Thomas Hunt, chair of orthopedic surgery at Baylor and a member of the Titleist Performance Institute's Medical Advisory Board.

Hunt said that the lead wrist, the left wrist in a right-handed golfer and vice versa, is the target of most of the force when your club hits the ball, so the repetitive impact can lead to overuse injury, tendon inflammation (tendonitis), and pain. While this is more common in the professional player with an unrelenting practice schedule, a rusty weekend golfer also may be at risk for these injuries.

To prevent this type of injury the occasional golfer should simply avoid overdoing it on the first trip to the course. Infrequent participation is often the culprit. Pre-exercise heat, stretching, and occasional use of anti-inflammatory medication prior to playing can be effective as well.

To treat it, Hunt suggests a period of rest, use of ice and gradual return to the sport over about two weeks. If this doesn't alleviate the pain, or if it returns quickly, he suggests seeing a sports-based hand and wrist physician to assess the injury and provide a definitive diagnosis.

Another cause of wrist injury, though not as frequent, is striking the ball with herculean force. This, in combination with an amateur's poor swing mechanics, can lead to grounding the club. Such rapid deceleration of the [club](#) head can cause cartilage or ligament tears in the lead wrist. To avoid these injuries, slow it down, concentrating on form and tempo. Regularly hitting off hard turf mats at the range can be a risk factor as well.

Hunt noted that once a [golfer](#) has an injury and subsequent pain, the [wrist](#) motion and grip strength tend to decrease, which can lead to re-[injury](#) with continued play. For this reason, the time spent obtaining a proper diagnosis and treating the disorder is well worth it and may avoid worsening the problem.

Provided by Baylor College of Medicine

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