



# Preparing for an Injury Free Golf Season



**GUEST CORNER**

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Golf is a popular sport enjoyed by millions worldwide, offering both physical activity and social engagement. However, it also comes with its fair share of risks for injuries. The article is to provide golfers with preventative strategies to minimize their risk of injury and enhance their overall performance and enjoyment in the sport.

**PLAYING GOLF ENGAGES YOUR ENTIRE BODY**

Playing golf requires your whole body to function together as a unit.

With each golf swing, your body undergoes a combination of rotational, compression, stretching, and shearing forces that moves around the stable link, the core. Each golf swing requires:

- stability from the core and buttock muscles (Glutes).
- flexibility from the torso (thoracic spine) and shoulders; and
- balance to manage a proper swing, as well as to pick up your golf balls.

**UNDERSTANDING COMMON GOLF INJURIES**

Understanding the origin of injuries will help you prevent injuries and to quickly rehabilitate the injuries:

1. Lower back pain: often caused by improper swing mechanics and weak core muscles.
2. Tendonitis: inflammation of tendons particularly in the elbows (golfers' or tennis elbow).
3. Shoulder injuries: rotator cuff strain and impingement.
4. Knee pain: can arise from the twisting motion during a swing.
5. Wrist injuries: sprains and strains can occur from gripping the club too tightly or improper swing mechanics.

**STRATEGIES FOR INJURY PREVENTION**

1. Proper warm-up before and cool-down after your game:

- Warm-up while you do deep diaphragm breathing to get oxygenated blood from your lungs into your muscles to help relieve tension and bring fuel to your muscles.
- Dynamic stretches which are controlled stretches through active movements. These functional and sport-specific movements help to prepare the muscles and joints for the explosive drive of a golf swing. It increases muscle temperature, mobility and coordination, and decrease stiffness.
- Cool-down such as gentle static stretches by holding a muscle in a position as far as it can stretch without pain for an extended period (15-30 seconds). The focus is to increase flexibility and range of motion to help relax the muscles, increase mobility, reduce muscle soreness, and improve recovery. Using static

stretching in a warm-up prior to a game may negatively impact your performance because static stretching may limit your body's ability to react quickly.

2. Develop a regular strengthening routine:

- **Core:** strong abdominal and glutes to enhance stability and power in your swing.
- **Legs and hips:** will aid in power and balance in your game.
- **Shoulders and arms:** resistance exercises to increase strength and prevent overuse injuries.

3. Balance exercises to control your body in space: stand on one leg and punch arms out to the front (10 times) and repeat while standing on the other leg.

4. Master the proper swing technique: consult with a golf coach or instructor to refine your swing technique can reduce strain on your muscles and joints.

**RECOMMENDED STRETCHING EXERCISES**

The following are dynamic warm-up stretches (repeat each stretch 5 times):

- **Torso twist:** hold your golf club behind your head or in front of your chest. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart, feet facing straight forward, knees slightly bent, and core and pelvis stable and tight. Twist your torso from one side to the other. Be sure to move through your trunk and do not force the movement. This exercise helps to keep your thoracic spine mobile and flexible.
- **Walking lunge:** take a step forward and lunge, keeping your front knee in line with your hip and ankle and lowering your back knee toward the floor without touching. Do not allow your front knee to drive past your front toes. Push off the back leg and step forward with the opposite leg, lunging in the same fashion. Engage your abdominal muscles throughout this exercise to avoid arching your back. Move your opposite arm as the front leg forward. This helps stretch the gluteus, hamstring and hip flexor muscles.

- **Leg swing:** anchor your golf club at a slight angle in front of your body for support. Stand on one leg and in a slow controlled motion swing the other leg in front of you and behind you through the full range of motion. Use your free arm to swing with your leg for balance. Make sure to engage your abdominal muscles to prevent your back from arching. This stretch helps to warm up your hamstrings and hip flexors.

The following are recommended static cool-down stretches (hold each stretch 30 seconds and repeat 3 times):

- **Shoulder posterior capsule stretch:** relax your shoulders, bring one arm across your body, and hold it with the other arm just above the elbow, pulling gently across your body.
- **Hamstring stretch:** place one leg on ground with foot flexed back and lean forward from your hips, keeping your back flat and knee straight until you feel a stretch in the back of your thigh.
- **Quadriceps stretch:** grab hold of one ankle with your hand from the same side. Tighten your stomach muscles to prevent your back from arching. Extend your thigh backwards, bend your knee and



bring your ankle up toward your butt. Be sure to keep your knee aligned with your hip by keeping your ankle in the same line as your hip, rather than angled outward or inward toward your body.

Prepare your body in early Spring to get

ready to enjoy your golf game throughout the prime golfing season. If you experience any pain or tightness doing any of the dynamic or static exercises, please contact your physical therapist or reach out to me as all exercises can be modified.

Lize Lubbe is the owner of Lize Lubbe Physical Therapy with its main practice located at 892 Route 35 in Cross River and a PT Studio in the premises of Apex Fitness (where her team focus on the rehabilitation of sports-related injuries). Learn more by calling 914-875-9430, emailing [contact@lizelubbept.com](mailto:contact@lizelubbept.com) or visiting [www.lizelubbept.com](http://www.lizelubbept.com).



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