

TOP 10 TIPS FOR GOLFING WITHOUT PAIN



- 1) **FUEL UP:** Your body (and your golf swing) require good fuel to perform at your best. Good nutrition (healthy fats and more protein than carbs) is a critical component of playing 18 holes without losing your steam at the end. Golfers often lose their stamina at the end of a round and recruit extra muscles to keep up the swing. This is often when golfers get hurt. Try to eat a well-balanced meal prior to your round.



Bring a trail mix, banana, and protein to have a small snack every 4-5 holes. A hotdog and a beer at the turn may sound good, but it could do you more harm than good -- and cause a swing breakdown in your final holes.

- 2) **HYDRATION IS KEY:** Did you know that more than 60% of your brain and body are made up of water? It's true, yet it is unlikely that you actually drink enough during a round to maximize your swing potential and prevent pain.



It is critical that you have a few glasses of water before your round, then drink water when you eat your healthy snack...every 4-5 holes. Be sure to drink more often (every hole) if the temperature is high. Try to avoid drinks with caffeine, alcohol, or a lot of sugar, as they will sap your energy. Some other good options are adding Drip-Drop (electrolyte replacement) or coconut water.

- 3) **TAKE SOME DEEP BREATHS:** Oxygen is another critical component of good performance and playing without pain. When you breathe well and take in more air, your muscles contract and relax with ease. Holding your breath creates tension in your upper body, and injuries,



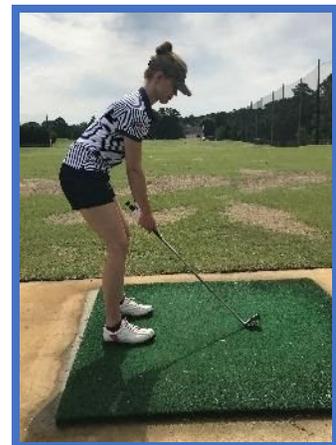
pain and swing faults are more common with unnecessary tension and muscle tightness. A fluid swing comes from well-oxygenated and relaxed tissues. Try taking 10 deep breaths before your next round, then take 2-3 more every hole. You'll be amazed at how much better you feel and swing!

- 4) **GET YOUR ZZZZs:** Getting good, restorative sleep is crucial for playing and living without pain. Your body restores and heals itself while you rest, so it is extremely important to begin a 4+ hour round of golf with good rest. If your brain and muscles



are fatigued, it is difficult to stay relaxed and maintain the endurance to walk 18 holes and carry your bag, let alone swing your club 40+ times and control your putts. Try to adjust your bedtime for those early tee-times, so you get at least 7-8 hours of solid sleep -- your body and swing will thank you for it!

- 5) **“WARM UP” BEFORE AND “COOL DOWN” AFTER YOUR ROUND:** Research shows that "warm" muscles move and perform better than "cold" muscles. This directly relates to your ability to "get in the game earlier" and to recover without pain. In addition, muscles that properly cool down will demonstrate less stiffness and soreness after a round of golf or range session. Try to get to the course at least 15-minutes early to warm up your hips and spine for maximum performance and reduced injury. TherExcel has developed a pre-round warm-up routine to help you “wake up” the muscles and body parts that should be working during your swing. To get a copy of the routine, email KMarlow@NCGOLFPT.com.



6) **YOUR FEET MATTER:** Try to pay more attention to your feet. Most of the time, your feet are the only parts of your body that touch the ground, so “how” they touch the ground matters.



In your address stance, your feet should have 3-points of contact with the ground: the ball of your pinky toe, the ball of your big toe, and your heel. Together, they form a tripod. If you bear more weight on your big toe and heel, your foot and knee will roll inward and set you up for possible pain anywhere up the chain. If you have more weight on your big and pinky toes, you will likely lose your balance and fall forward, throwing your swing off balance. A stable and pain-free golf swing comes from being balanced evenly on your foot “tripods”.

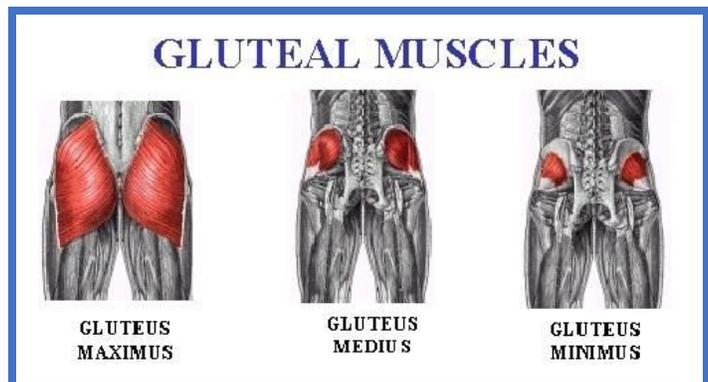
7) **THE GLUTES ARE KING:** Focus your strength-training on the gluteus maximus (for power) medius, & minimus (for hip control). These muscles work together to stabilize both the hips and lower spine in your golf swing.

Weakness in these muscles decreases stability, form, and the ability

to demonstrate proper weight-shift in your back-swing and downswing.

A stable base allows for better swing rotation and reduces faulty swing characteristics. Pay attention

next time you swing your club -- do you feel your glutes working? If not, you may be setting yourself up for a round filled with pain, injury, or just lousy swings.



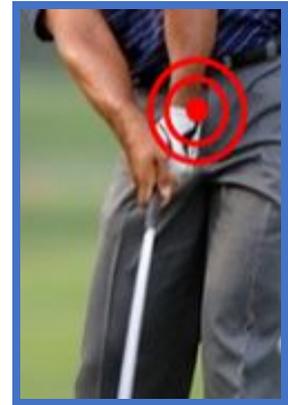
8) **CHANGE YOUR GOLF POSTURE AND CHANGE YOUR SWING:** Keep your lower spine



(back) in a NEUTRAL (not flat or arched) position, and you will increase your trunk rotation around your upper spine. This will allow you to safely maintain a stable base, and "wind" further into your back-swing in the right place, which will protect

your low back and hips. This will also translate into increased energy transfer into your downswing and follow-through...making a more efficient and powerful swing.

- 9) **LISTEN TO YOUR BODY:** Have you ever felt a little twinge, numbness, burning, or tension right before you hurt yourself? It is likely that you have, but you didn't pay attention to it. Your brain is very smart and its main job is to protect your body while you do the things that you want to do -- like play golf! It is critical that you notice and listen to the **red flags** that your brain is waving to protect your body. Next time you feel a muscle in your back or shoulder-blade tightening up, pay attention to it! Your brain is trying to tell you that if you swing your club with this spasm, you will likely feel pain or possibly hurt yourself. When you do notice a red flag, stop, readjust your posture, and reassess if you still feel it. If you do, be sure to swing easy so you do not injure yourself. Golfers generally get injured when they swing hard, so take it easy.



- 10) **FOCUS PART OF YOUR REGULAR GYM WORKOUT ON YOUR ADDRESS AND SWING POSTURES:**



You may already have a gym routine that keeps you healthy and fit, but does it help your golf game? Try adding a few simple exercises to maximize how your body moves in your swing. Work your trunk rotation in your 7-iron posture. Stretch your back/hips into your backswing and downswing. Pay attention to your foot "tripod" as you work out or lift weights. Perform some glute-specific bridges and squats (see picture). You can exercise your body into "Golf Shape". Maintain this routine even through the off-season. Don't forget...the cold months are not the end of this season, but the beginning of NEXT season!

If you are experiencing any pain that is affecting your golf game, please contact me for a FREE 30-minute phone consultation!

*Kjersten Marlow, MPT, TPI Level 3 Medical, SFMA
(919) 812-1717
KMarlow@NCGOLFPT.com*