
Swing Strong: Golf Joint Health and Injury Prevention

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Common Types of Golf Related Injuries

Common upper body injuries in golf include:

- Shoulder/Rotator Cuff Pathologies
- Medial/Lateral Epicondylitis (Golf/Tennis Elbow)
- Hand/Wrist Pathologies

Common lower body injuries in golf include:

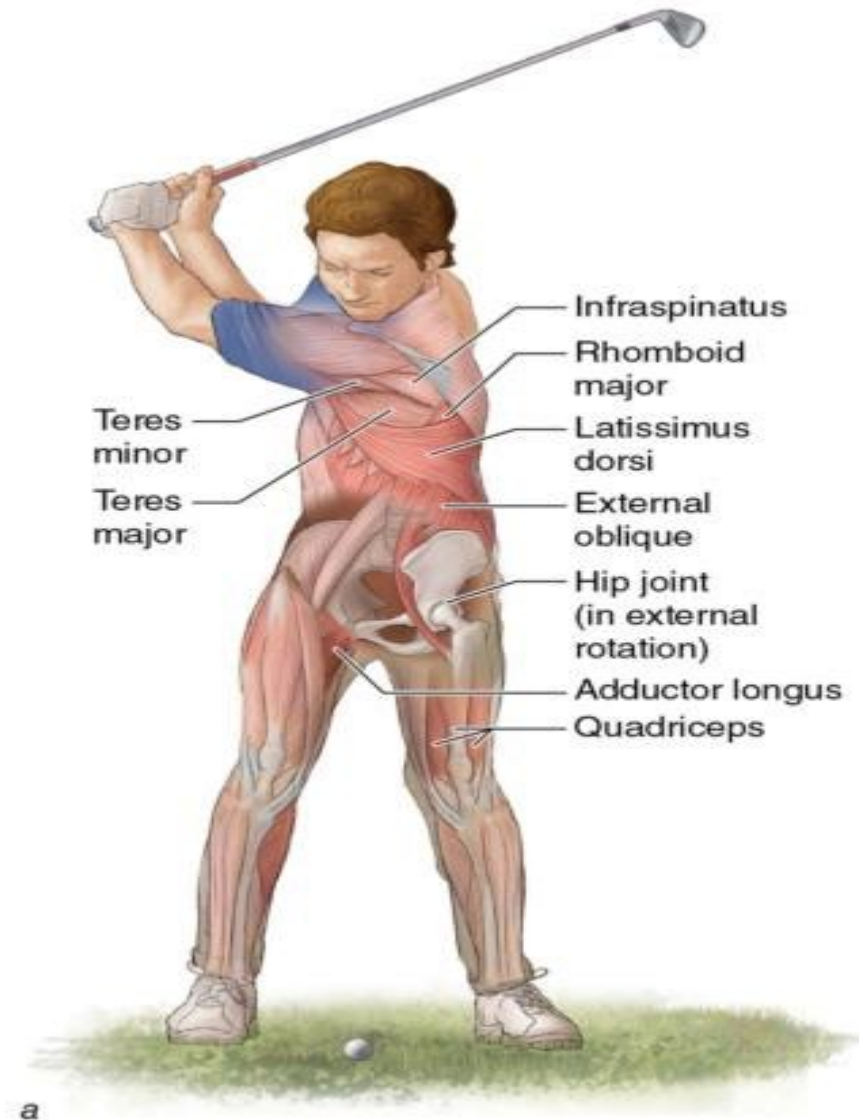
- Lumbosacral Pathologies
- Hip Pathologies
- Knee Pathologies
- Foot/Ankle Pathologies



Upper Body Injuries in Golf

- **Shoulder/Rotator Cuff Pathologies**

- **Tendinopathy**
 - Normally because of overuse/repetitive motion
 - Pain and swelling most common symptoms
- **Impingement**
 - Due to repetitive friction and poor rotation during swing
 - Can cause sharp pain during or after swing along with joint weakness
- **Rupture/Tear**
 - Labrum vs Rotator Cuff
 - Likely requires Physical Therapy, possible Surgical Intervention

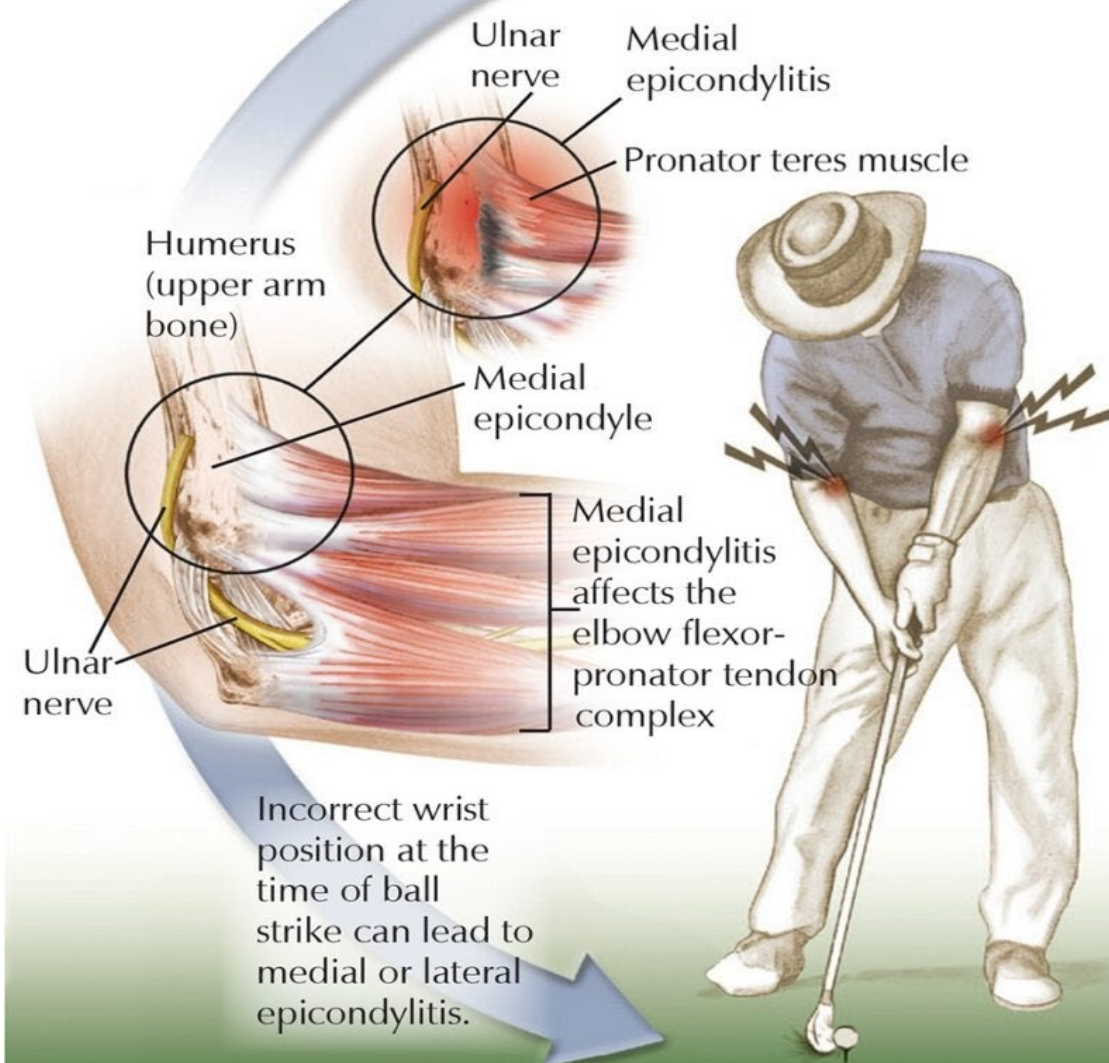


Upper Body Injuries in Golf

• Elbow Pathologies

- Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow)
 - Result of repetitive overuse and poor swing mechanics
 - Excessive forearm extension, over-gripping your club, and forearm rotation
 - More likely to be from activities of daily living (working with tools, turning doorknobs, writing, shaking hands etc.)
 - Can cause pain, swelling/inflammation, and weakness
- Medial Epicondylitis (Golfer's Elbow)
 - Result of overuse and improper swing mechanics
 - Excessive wrist lag, too tight of a grip, striking ground before ball (fat shot/chunk)
 - Can cause pain, swelling/inflammation, numbness/tingling, and weakness

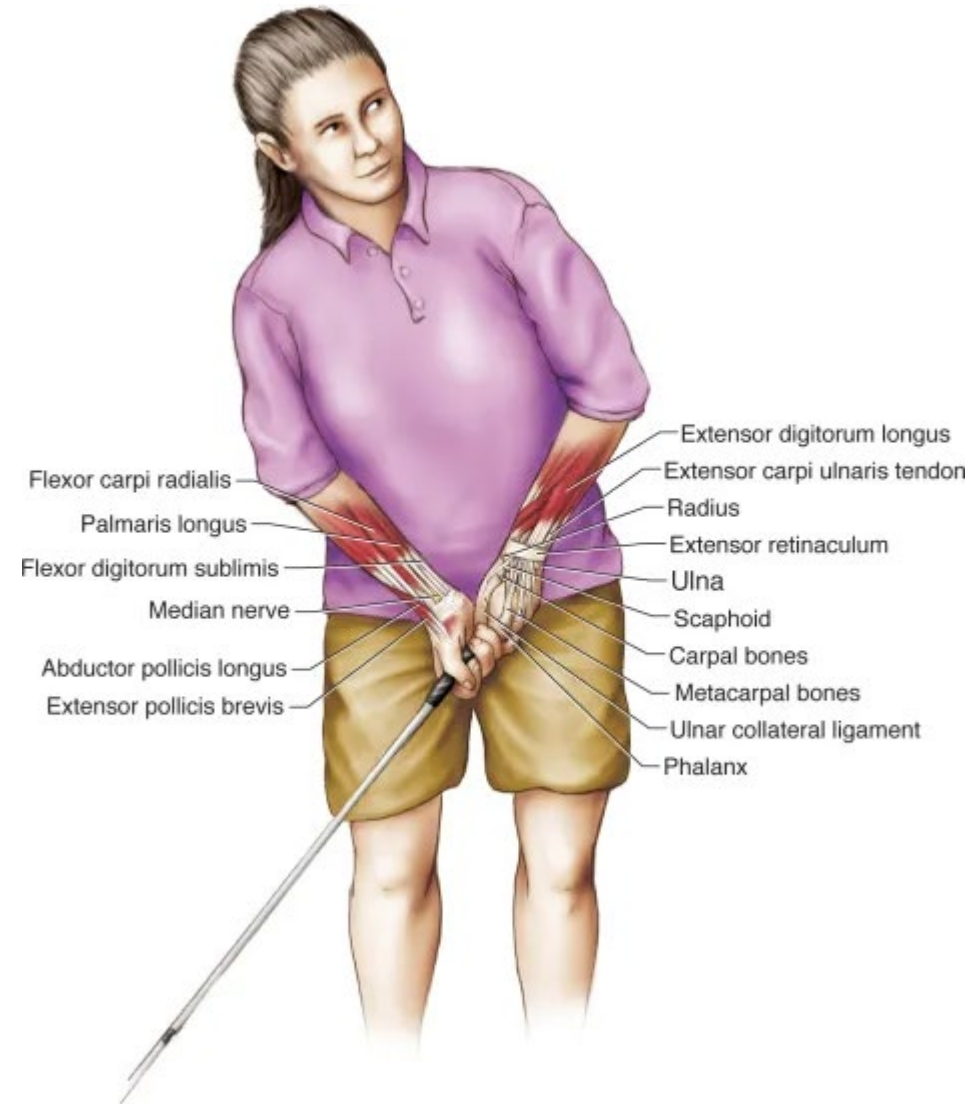
Fig. 1. Normal elbow anatomy and medial epicondylitis, or golfer's elbow



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Upper Body Injuries in Golf

- **Hand/Wrist Pathologies** (Most often the lead hand)
 - **Tendinopathy**
 - Due to overuse/repetitive motion (often on the pinky side)
 - Pain and swelling most common symptoms
 - **Arthritis**
 - Decrease in joint space over time due to repetitive forces (over-use, over-gripping, chunking shots)
 - Localized pain in the effected joints
 - **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**
 - Excessive wrist flexion with ADL's, repetitive over-gripping, and hitting fat/chunking shots
 - Cause numbness/tingling and weakness in the wrist/hand
 - **Ruptures/Tears/Fractures**
 - Often due to acute trauma (hitting hard ground/tree root/rocks) or improper swing mechanics
 - Common injuries include hamate fracture, TFCC rupture, ligament sprains/tears



Upper Body Injuries in Golf, Treatment and Injury Prevention

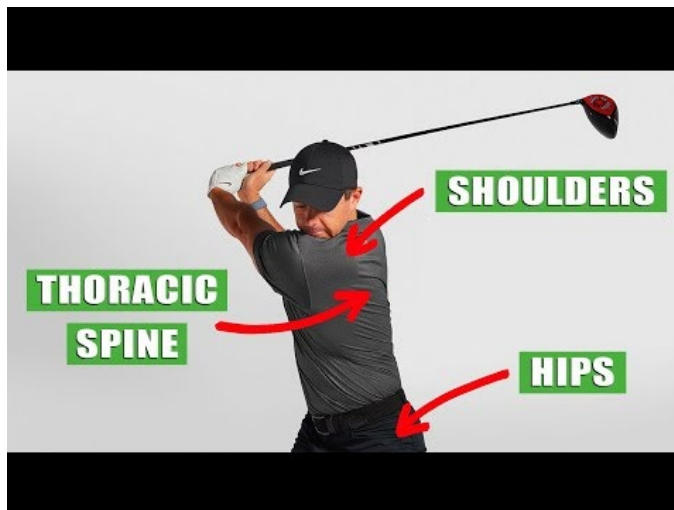
What should I do for the pain?

- Proper warm up and cool down before/after your round is vital for BOTH health and performance, below are a few things you can do for these upper body issues:
 - Stretching- helps to prevent injury, increase blood flow and circulation to the area, increase power and speed
 - Mobility- helps to reduce muscle strain, improve swing and tempo mechanics, overall better body function and biomechanics
 - Bracing- designed to increase injury prevention, relieve pain, and correct body mechanics/mobility for the desired area

Stretching



Mobility



Bracing



Upper Body Stretching for Golf

Listed below are a few stretches for each region we have discussed so far. Dynamic or active stretching prior to your round is preferred or recommended as opposed to “traditional” static stretching.

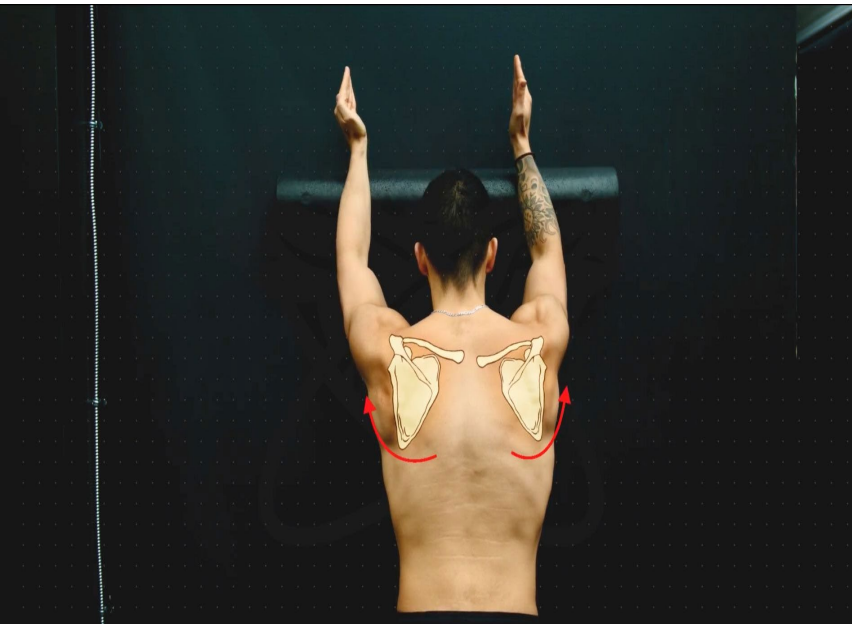
- Shoulder: cross-body stretch, wall angels, doorway stretch, thoracic extension, towel stretch, sleeper stretch
- Elbow: wrist flexor and extensor stretches, forearm rotations
- Wrist/Hand: prayer stretch, finger flicks, wrist rotations/clocks, swimmers



Upper Body Mobility for Golf

Listed below are a few examples of mobility work that encompasses each region we have discussed so far. Mobility is crucial in the golf swing to ensure optimal performance, building consistency, and reduce the risk for injury.

- Shoulder- Scapulothoracic Mobility: windmills, thread the needle, serratus slides
- Elbow- pronator/supinator mobility, flexor/extensor mobility
- Wrist/Hand-circumduction, radial/ulnar deviation



Upper Body Bracing/DME for Golf

Listed below are a few examples of braces or DME's (durable medical equipment) that can be used or utilized for pain relief, joint stability, and injury prevention for the regions we have discussed.

- Shoulder- sully brace or other stability braces, compression sleeves, posture braces
- Elbow- compression sleeves and counterforce straps
- Wrist/Hand- compression sleeves, wrist braces, thumb spicas
- Kinesiology Tape or KT Tape is also used to provide relief and stability to these areas as well



Lower Body Injuries in Golf

- **Lumbosacral Pathologies**

- Spondylolisthesis/Spondylosis

- Due to the combination of hyperextension and rotation in the golf swing
 - Can cause stress fractures and forward slipping of the bone

- Lumbar Disc Herniation

- Due to repetitive high force/speed twisting and forward bending
 - Can cause referred pain into the leg

- Sacroiliac (SI) Joint Dysfunction/Sprain

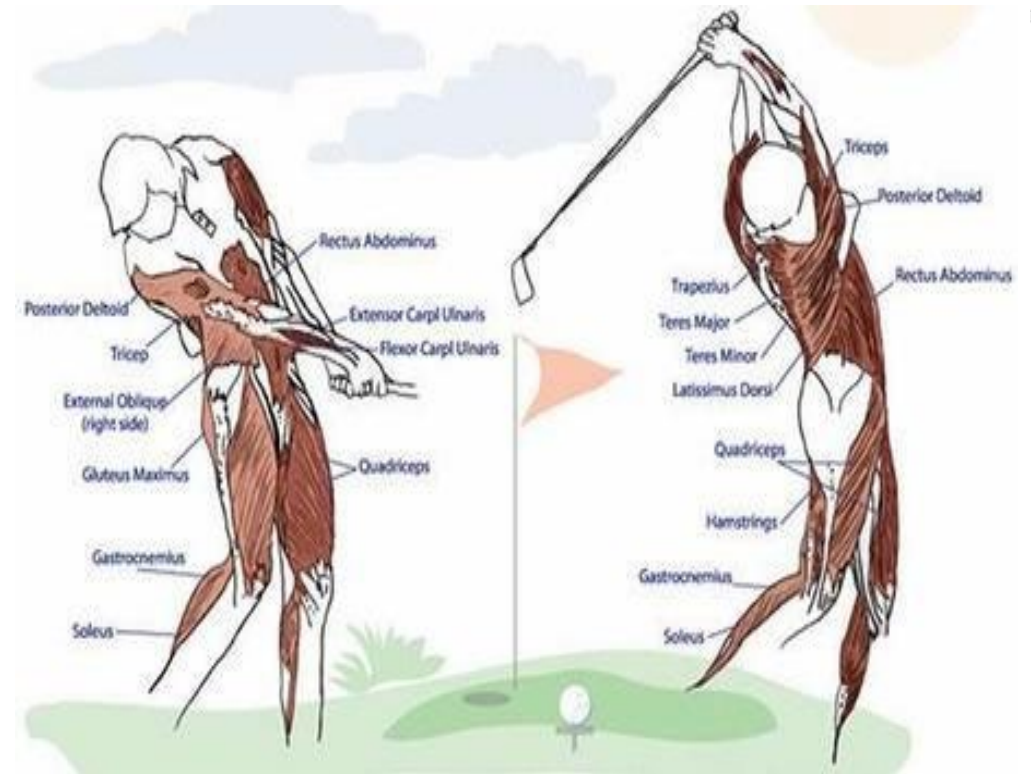
- Normally due to improper weight transfer and pelvic rotation during the golf swing
 - Can cause stiffness and sharp pain during movement



Lower Body Injuries in Golf

• Hip Pathologies

- Hamstring Tendinopathy
 - Buttock pain from overuse / excessive walking on hilly terrain
- Gluteal Tendinopathy / Bursitis
 - Due to overuse and improper swing mechanics
 - Can cause sharp pain on the outside of the hip
- Impingement (FAI) / Labral Tear
 - Due to repetitive friction and poor rotation during swing
 - Can cause sharp pain during or after swing along with joint weakness
- Osteoarthritis (OA)
 - Decrease in joint space and cartilage over time (over-use, poor mechanics, prior injury etc.)
 - Localized pain in the effected joints



Lower Body Injuries in Golf

- **Knee Pathologies**

- Sprains/Tears/Fractures
 - ACL/MCL/Meniscus injuries most common with trauma (Tiger 2008 US Open)
 - Due to forceful rotation, sudden pivoting, and excessive rotational torque through impact
- Tendinopathy
 - Patellar most common, quadriceps possible as well
 - Often due to improper use/technique and overuse
- Osteoarthritis (OA)
 - Decrease in joint space and cartilage over time (over-use, poor mechanics, prior injury etc.)
 - Localized pain/stiffness in the effected joints



Golfballing 
@golfballingpod

During the 2008 U.S. Open, Tiger Woods played with a torn ACL and stress fractures in his tibia—injuries kept secret until 2 days after his win, when he announced surgery and a season-ending break.



Lower Body Injuries in Golf

- **Foot and Ankle Pathologies**

- **Heel and Arch Conditions**

- **Plantar Fasciitis**

- Inflammation of the connective tissue band on the bottom of the foot, causes sharp pain

- **Achilles Tendinopathy**

- Chronic inflammation of the tendon that attaches the calf to the heel, causes pain, stiffness, swelling

- **Blisters**



Lower Body Injuries in Golf

- **Foot and Ankle Pathologies**

- Forefoot and Toe Pain
 - Turf Toe
 - Hyperextension of the big toe during the follow through of the swing, causes pain and joint stiffness
 - Metatarsalgia
 - Inflammation in the ball of the foot caused from constant pressure
 - Morton's Neuroma
 - Thickening of tissue around nerve in foot/toes, causes numbness and tingling



Lower Body Injuries in Golf, Treatment and Injury Prevention

What should I do for the pain?

- Proper warm up and cool down before/after your round is vital for BOTH health and performance, below are a few things you can do for these lower body issues:
 - Stretching- helps to prevent injury, increase blood flow and circulation to the area, increase power and speed
 - Mobility- helps to reduce muscle strain, improve swing and tempo mechanics, overall better body function and biomechanics
 - Bracing- designed to increase injury prevention, relieve pain, and correct body mechanics/mobility for the desired area



Lower Body Stretching for Golf

Listed below are a few stretches for each region we have discussed so far. Dynamic or active stretching prior to your round is preferred or recommended as opposed to “traditional” static stretching.

- Lumbar: cat-cow stretch, hip flexor stretch, 90/90 knee to chest, seated rotations, figure 4 stretch
- Hip/Knee: hamstring stretch, quadriceps stretch, glute stretch, hip openers, adductor stretch
- Foot/Ankle: gastrocnemius stretch, soleus stretch, tibialis anterior stretch



Lower Body Mobility for Golf

Listed below are a few examples of mobility work that encompasses each region we have discussed so far. Mobility is crucial in the golf swing to ensure optimal performance, build consistency, and reduce the risk for injury.

- Lumbar: windshield wipers, torso twists, birddogs, deadbugs, palloff press
- Hip/Knee: hip clocks, pigeon pose, 90/90 hip switch, glute bridge
- Foot/Ankle: towel scrunches, ankle circles, toe lifts/spreads, golf ball roll



Lower Body Bracing/DME in Golf

Listed below are a few examples of braces or DME's (durable medical equipment) that can be used or utilized for pain relief, joint stability, and injury prevention for the regions we have discussed.

- Lumbar: elastic supports, semi rigid targeted compression wraps, pulley system mechanical braces, SI belts, etc.
- Hip/Knee: compression sleeves, patellar tendon strap, hinged knee brace, reaction style knee braces
- Foot/Ankle: orthotics, compression sleeves, lace up braces, hinged and semi rigid stabilizers, arch and Achilles support



Activity Modifications for Golf

How/What can I do to modify my game to be able to play more without pain?

- Outside of what we can do for our bodies, there are also a few things you can do with your equipment to maximize your longevity on the course
 - Grips- for those with pain associated with arthritis, try using larger grips on your clubs to reduce pain in the hands and wrists
 - Shafts- switching from steel to graphite shafts can greatly reduce the shock absorption your hands, wrists, and arms take when striking the ball/ground
 - Club Length/Weight- using shorter club lengths and weight to decrease torque and stress on the injured joints
 - Flex- using a more flexible shaft will reduce the amount of physical demand on your body during the golf swing



Relative Size

A - Standard

B - Midsize

C - Jumbo

D - Super Jumbo



When To See a Doctor

- Acute injury / trauma with associated pain
- Pain that is worsening despite rest, over the counter medications, and warm-up / rehab exercises
- Pain that results in altered mechanics or a limp
- Swollen joint or soft tissue that is not improving
- Pain that is consistently $>3/10$ at rest and is not improving

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MetroHealth is here to help.

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Any Questions???





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