

Barriers to Performance: Part 1 of 4

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I have yet to meet a golfer who is satisfied with their game. Every golfer wants to play better. The 25-handicapper wants to break 90. The 12-handicapper wants to break 80. The tour pros need to lower their scoring averages to avoid losing their playing privileges for next season. Golf's famous elite are always trying to play better to qualify for a spot on the Ryder Cup Team or the Tour Championship at the end of the year.

No matter what their level of play, your patients want to play better.

Unfortunately, improvement in golf is hard to come by. In fact, only one half of one percent of the world's 40 million golfers can play the game at par. The average score for 18 holes of golf is over 100.

The purpose of this four-part series is to help you, the treating physician, understand your golf patient's barriers to performance.

There are four primary barriers to performance:

- Physical Pain
- Emotional Stress
- Environmental Allergens
- Poor Nutrition

Physical Pain: Physical pain is defined as suffering or distress. Obviously, it's hard to play your best golf if you're in pain. For your average golf patient, the root cause of his or her pain is a repetitive strain syndrome. When golfers are at the driving range or on the course, they swing their clubs hundreds of times at an average rate of 90 mph per swing. To swing a golf club 90 mph requires the same amount of energy as trying to lift a heavy weight four times before complete fatigue ... and remember, not once, but hundreds of times! It's no wonder that 50 percent of golfers suffer physical pain. If your patient's body has not been conditioned for golf, he or she is at risk of injury.

Flexibility: There are 14 points of physical examination necessary to evaluate the flexibility fitness of your patients who play golf. You need to learn which golf muscles need to be long for quickness, and which golf muscles need to be short for strength and stability. Patients who lack the necessary flexibility are subluxated. They have adhesions in their soft tissue. These patients are at risk of injury every time they practice at the range or play a round of golf.

Posture: Good posture is essential for playing good golf. If your patients do not have adequate cervical and lumbar lordosis, they cannot maintain the athletic position (and therefore, good balance) when swinging the club. If your patients have tilted and rotated hips and shoulders, their range of motion will be compromised. Without good posture, your patients cannot hit long and powerful golf shots.

Subluxation, soft-tissue adhesions, poor posture ... chiropractic is the obvious treatment of choice for golf injuries!

In part 2 of this series, I will address the issue of emotional stress as a barrier to performance.

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DECEMBER 2004

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