

Golf

Spring and summer sports do not always have to involve strenuous activity. One of the more popular warm weather sports can be played by barely breaking a sweat. Golf is a sport filled with precision and dexterity, and is an extremely popular outdoor activity today. Don't let this fool you, however – just because a sport is more relaxed does not mean that it is injury free. There are plenty of safety precautions that can be used to avoid problems and injury on the greens.

Most golfing injuries involve the lower back, the elbow and the shoulder. These injuries can be the result of overuse related to excessive practicing; poor swing mechanics and lack of conditioning.

A “perfect stroke” is the goal of every golfer and in this pursuit; swing-related injuries are much more common in the inexperienced golfer. Rotator cuff injuries can affect the swing by altering your mechanics. The pain can be severe enough to prevent you from even swinging the club at all. After a thorough evaluation, treatment may consist of strengthening, flexibility, medication and rarely arthroscopy. Proper conditioning is also needed, and with the sport of golf in mind the emphasis should be on the back and shoulder. A conditioning commonly known as “golfer's Back” is when the lumbar spine is injured causing muscle spasms and back pain. Prevention includes a trunk flexibility and muscle strengthening program, use of proper body mechanics and an appropriate warm-up before going out on the course.

Another hazard that applies to the sport exclusively is the golf cart. Although a quick and efficient way to travel around the large golf course, golf carts can be dangerous if used inappropriately or recklessly. One common way to hurt yourself in a golf cart is by leaving the free foot to drag across the grass instead of keeping it in the cart – it is easier than you think to catch your toes in an object lying on the round, causing fractures and other injuries. Not only can the foot get caught on an object, but spikes can get stuck in the grass, causing the foot to bend backwards while the cart is in full motion. A simple careless error can result in serious injury, perhaps even permanent disability. When driving a golf cart, always be extra cautious on slopes or in wet conditions. Make sure you allow your partner time to get completely

seated before beginning to drive. Also, the consumption of alcohol and driving a golf cart is equivalent to drinking and driving a car, and the consequences can be just as dangerous

Although golf requires less physical activity than many other sports, there are health risks at hand. If the temperature is warm, be sure to drink plenty of fluids and keep a moist towel nearby – heat stroke can be a very real possibility if you don't. All in all, there is more risk for injury in playing a game of football than golf, but these safety precautions will make your time on the course that much more enjoyable.