

Proper form is good for your game and your back.

As baby boomers begin to retire and gain more leisure time, and a generation looks to new role models like Tiger Woods, golf continues to gain in popularity. And as more people play, more are suffering from low back pain. Pain usually results from muscle strain, tendon or muscle attachment damage or disc injury. While conditions like degenerative disc disease or spondylosis can contribute to golf-related back pain, in most cases it is preventable.



So, how can you enjoy 18 holes without an aching back? Prepare. Start by being in good physical condition, keep your hamstrings flexible and do a thorough warm up with stretching and easy swings.

Best way to prevent golfing back injuries:

- Warm-up well
 - Use good swing mechanics
 - Carry bag properly
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Next, swing well. A good swing begins with bent knees, feet shoulder-width apart and weight on the balls of the feet. As you swing, contract your abdominals to help brace the spine. The shoulder, hip, chest and lower spine should rotate to share the load. You may want to call on a golf pro to help.

If you carry your bag, consider an integrated golf bag stand that opens when set down. Use dual straps on the golf bag to evenly divide the weight across the back. And when placing or retrieving your ball, stand with one foot forward of the other and bend from the knees and hips.

If you injure your back golfing don't play through the pain. Rest is the best prescription, along with ice and an over-the-counter pain medication. If pain continues for more than two to six weeks you may have a more serious condition and should visit a spine care specialist like Sierra Neurosurgery Group. For more information, call 775.323.2080 or visit sierraneurosurgery.com 