

Functional Training Improves Club Head Speed and Fitness in Golfers

According to a recent article published in the *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research* performing a functional based exercise program has been proven to increase the club head speed of golfers as well as their perceived and measured level of physical fitness. The average improvement in club head speed was 4 mph, which added approximately 30-45 ft. to the driving distance off the tee. The authors of the study concluded increased flexibility along with strength have a greater influence on club head speed than either one alone. Participants in the study performed an eight week training program that incorporated static and balance drills, progressive strengthening exercises, and flexibility activities. Participants were also scored on standardized fitness test parameters which showed a marked improvement following completion of the 8 week program.

Physical therapists, Aaron Nevdal and Denny Kolkebeck, state that golfers must maintain appropriate balance of flexibility, strength, and stability throughout the entire body to prevent injury since the golf swing is an asymmetrical motion to carry out repetitively. Mr. Nevdal has known the importance of this both personally and professionally due to playing golf over the years as well as through seeing patients who have either sustained injury or are unable to golf due to pain limitations in muscles and joints. In addition, Mr. Nevdal also offers a PEAK Golf program to enhance the performance and longevity of non-injured golfers seeking performance enhancement at Northern Rehab and Sports Medicine Associates.

Physical therapist Nevdal and Kolkebeck recommend the following tips to help lower the risk of injuries while golfing:

1. Take It Easy. Most golfing injuries result from overuse.
2. Warm Up. Performing a golf-specific warm up before a round focusing on the hips and spine mobility has been shown to reduce injury rate in golfers.
3. Focus on Swing Mechanics. Correcting swing mechanics and posture as you contact the ball may assist in preventing common injuries as well as assist in the length and accuracy of the drive.
4. Use Common Sense. Be in shape to play your sport and drink plenty of water when on the golf course during the summer months.

Mr. Nevdal will be facilitating a free class at the Kishwaukee Family YMCA on May 17, 2007 at 6 p.m. covering the topic of golf performance enhancement and injury prevention. Mr. Nevdal and Mr. Kolkebeck are available for further consultation or discussion related to the article at Northern Rehab and Sports Medicine Associates at 815-756-8524.