

Common Swing and Posture Faults, Part 1
By Dr Andrew J Park

Last month we spoke about the importance of mobility versus stability at adjacent parts of your body to produce correct movement patterns. This month, we will introduce common swing and posture faults that lead to pain and altered swing patterns.

Amateur Golf Injury Stats			
Injury Area	Male	Female	Average
Low back	53.2%	44.6%	51.67%
Left elbow	23.5%	27.3%	24.2%
Left shoulder	8.7%	4.0%	7.88%
Left wrist	6.1%	14.1%	7.52%
Left ankle	2.9%	2.8%	2.91%
Right hip	1.1%	1.6%	1.21%
Left hip	0.9%	1.6%	0.99%
Right knee	0.6%	1.2%	0.71%
Left knee	0.5%	0.4%	0.50%

Professional Golf Injury Stats			
Injury Area	PGA	LPGA	Average
Left wrist	16.1%	31.3%	23.9%
Low back	25.0%	22.4%	23.7%
Left hand	6.8%	7.5%	7.12%
Left shoulder	10.9%	3.0%	6.87%
Left knee	7.3%	6.0%	6.62%
Left elbow	3.1%	4.5%	3.82%
Left thumb	5.2%	1.5%	3.31%
Foot	2.1%	4.5%	3.31%
Cervical spine	4.7%	1.5%	3.05%
Right wrist	1.6%	4.5%	3.05%
Ribs	3.1%	3.0%	3.05%
Right elbow	4.2%	1.5%	2.80%
Right shoulder	0.5%	4.5%	2.54%
Thoracic spine	4.2%	0.0%	2.04%
Ankles	1.0%	3.0%	2.04%
Groin	1.0%	1.5%	1.27%
Left hip	2.1%	0.0%	1.02%
Head	1.0%	0.0%	0.51%

Titleist Performance Institute has the largest number of data related to golf statistics and injuries than any other organization in the world. According to their data, the most common injuries for the female and male amateur are the low back followed by left elbow (right-handed golfer). For the PGA, it is the low back followed by left wrist and for the LPGA, it is the left wrist followed by low back.

The most common mechanisms of injuries are:

1. Poor body mechanics
2. Poor swing biomechanics
3. Excessive practice (overuse)
4. No regular customized exercise program
5. Poor nutrition
6. Improper club fitting



The most common swing fault to cause low back pain is called Reverse Spine Angle. It is defined as any excessive upper body backward bend or excessive left lateral upper body bend during the backswing (right-handed golfer). This fault makes it difficult to initiate the downswing from the reverse bend causing swing path problems and decreased club head speed. The causes are:

- The inability to separate your upper from your lower body.
- Limited right hip internal rotation leading to lateral sway.
- Inability to activate your core to stabilize your spine angle.



The most common posture to cause low back pain is S-Posture. It is caused by having too much arch in your lower back or sticking your tail bone out too far. This is commonly found on golfers with lower-cross syndrome, where the hip flexors (psoas) and lower back are tight while the hip extensors (gluts) and abdominals are weak/inhibited. This muscle imbalance places excessive stress on the structures of the low back. Other muscles are recruited to take place of weak muscles, furthering the imbalance. People who sit for a prolonged period of time usually develop lower-cross syndrome.

The opposite of S-posture is called C-Posture. This is when your upper back and shoulders are hunched forward at address. This is often due to limited thoracic extension abilities and complicated by upper-cross syndrome, where imbalance includes tight pectorals, latissimus, upper trapezius, levator scapula muscles with weak/inhibited middle and lower trapezius, serratus anterior, and deep neck flexors. The core is another region of dysfunction causing lack of pelvic flexion at address.



The most likely common reason for wrist injury for an amateur is called Early Release or Scooping. Poor mechanics is the reason for this fault. On the downswing, the golfer prematurely releases the wrist causing cupping of the lead wrist at impact. The result is a loss of power, consistency, and injury. The lower body is limited in the downswing process causing the upper body to compensate.

Dr Andrew J Park is a Doctor of Chiropractic with a Masters in Nutrition and Masters in Acupuncture. He is a certified Titleist Performance Institute Medical Professional, PSC Certified Chiropractic Provider on the PGA Tour, Active Release Provider for the IRONMAN and Revolution 3 Triathlon. Contact Dr Park at bleuhealthsports@yahoo.com for questions, comments, future article requests or visit us at www.bleuhealthsports.com. Copyright Dr. Andrew J Park

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