

## Golf Health and Fitness

### Article: **Getting out of the rough with your cuff!**

There aren't too many golfers in the world that can't say they haven't experienced some sort of soft tissue injury as a result of playing golf. The number 1 golf related injury is the back, followed by the wrist and elbow. But one region of the body that seems to have its share of serious problems is the shoulder.

Due to its anatomical complexity, and its extreme mobility the shoulder is highly vulnerable to injury because of poor stability. The shoulder is a ball and socket joint, while the shoulder complex is made up of the humerus (arm bone), the clavicle, and the scapula (the shoulder blade). The glenohumeral joint is the unstable portion of the shoulder complex and is susceptible to anterior instability due to forward translation of the shoulder because of muscle imbalances. It is reinforced by the rotator cuff (The Infraspinatus, Supraspinatus, Subscapularis and Teres minor), which holds the head of the humerus down in its glenoid cavity. Other actions include internal and external rotation, and abduction.

During the swing the rotator cuff muscles are highly active from start to finish, having to help accelerate and decelerate movement which makes them vulnerable to injury. If you are a right handed golfer, during the backswing it is the right rotator cuff that will be limited into external rotation and completing the followthrough it is the left rotator cuff that is limited to externally rotate fully if there are flexibility restrictions. Other shoulder muscles that are involved are the latissimus Dorsi, Teres Major and the pectoralis major. It is important to have good flexibility and strength in these muscle groups in order to reduce the chances for serious injury.

Some of the injuries that can occur from hitting too many divots, coming out of the rough too hard, digging yourself out from the sand and improper mechanics just to name a few, are adhesive capsulitis, impingement syndrome, tendonitis, bursitis, and sprains to the articulation of bones. . All of these conditions if untreated can lead to more serious rotator cuff problems.

There are 3 grades of strains indicated for the rotator cuff that is helpful to know, so that you don't underestimate the extent of the injury. Grade 1- there is a mild tearing of fibers that has little or no pain with no loss of range of motion. Grade 2- Moderate tearing of fibers with loss of motion and moderate to severe pain. Grade 3- is a severe tear of the muscle away from the bone, causing severe loss of motion and very painful. Some of the signs and symptoms of a tear include a noticeable clicking or loud pop, pain with overhead movements, reaching out to the side and behind your back, there may be a deep ache in the shoulder that just won't go away.

Initially treating the injury with ice compression and elevation for the first 72 hours is important in order to decrease swelling and pain. If symptoms worsen, seek a physician's advice. Gaining back lost range of motion, and regaining strength and function are of important value to the individual.

The problem that most of the shoulder clients that I have seen is that they wait until the problem worsens or inhibits their swing before they will do anything about it. They figure that they will heal like before and so they will keep on playing until they can't properly function.

Working out intelligently by targeting your weak areas by adding core strengthening exercises is of great value to the golfer, for it will help the shoulder learn how to stabilize during static and dynamic movements.

So if you have injured your shoulder playing golf or any other activity don't hesitate to have it checked out, it may not be anything serious or it could keep you sidelined for a long time.

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