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PLAY SAFE

DOCS' ADVICE ON
TREATMENT OF
GOLFING INJURIES

BY
ARULJOHN

Dr Andrew Dutton (above), Medical Director and Orthopaedic Surgeon of SMG Orthopaedic Group, and Dr Lim Kai Hung (inset), Family Physician, Family Medicine, SMG Medical, a Singapore Medical Group, answer readers' questions about golfing injuries.



What are the most common injuries golfers face and why?

Dr Dutton: Common injuries are:

- Knee injuries which may occur after twisting the knee while walking on uneven terrain or from the rotational force placed upon the knee during the swing. This may injure the side ligaments of the knee or the meniscus (fibrocartilaginous cushions within the joint).
- Elbow pain due to tendon injuries known as golfer's elbow. This may be caused by poor technique, inadequate stretching or overuse.
- Shoulder pain caused by impingement or 'pinching' of the shoulder tendons during a club swing.
- Back strain due to weak core muscles and poor swing technique.

What treatments are suitable for the conditions highlighted in Question 1?

Dr Dutton: Treatment starts with improving the body's core strength and conditioning with proper aerobic and strength training. Pre-game stretching is important and often overlooked when a person is rushing to join a flight when he is late for a game.

Clubs should be properly sized and shoes should be appropriately supportive. Poor technique needs to be corrected by going back for a few sessions of professional coaching.

If a player is injured, he or she should rest and ice the injured region. If discomfort continues, he should be reviewed by a sports doctor or orthopaedist.

Initial medical treatment may include anti-inflammatory medication, bracing, physiotherapy or an injection.

During hazy conditions, what Pollutant Standards Index (PSI) readings are un-

suitable for playing golf?

Dr Lim: A PSI level of above 100 is considered unhealthy. Golfers are advised to stay indoors, especially those with ailments such as asthma or any other lung disease, when PSI levels rise above 100.

How many hours of rest should golfers get before each game?

Dr Dutton: There are no definite guidelines on this as each person is different. Factors would include:

- The person's general fitness level and state of body conditioning.
- Whether the game is during the day, morning or evening.
- Whether 9 or 18 holes are being played and whether a buggy is used for transportation.

A general guideline is to gradually increase the amount of time spent playing golf. If one begins to feel post-game muscle aches, fatigue or joint discomfort, then the timing between games should be increased.

Patients with underlying cardiac or respiratory conditions should follow their physician's advice with regards to this.

Dr Lim: According to the Health Promotion Board website, an average adult needs 6-8 hours of sleep daily. If one feels weak and tired and has body aches after consecutive golfing sessions, it is time to take a break. Golfers should also allow any musculo-skeletal injuries to heal adequately before starting their sessions. Adequate rest and recovery can prevent minor injuries from escalating into major ones.

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(From left) Atsushi Yoshimura, Ng Chiang Ling and Audi MD Jeff Mannering.

COUPLE WIN MEXICO TRIP

They went into the competition with no expectations.

And that showed in the play-off when Atsushi Yoshimura and Ng Chiang Ling remained calm and composed as they cinched victory and a place in the Audi quattro Cup 2015 World Final in Mexico from Nov 29 to Dec 3.

The husband-and-wife pair, winners of the Tanjong course in the qualifiers on Sept 4, edged out Serapong winners David Gartrell and Colin Clark on the third play-off hole in fading light in front of a huge gallery.

It was a dramatic finish on the par-four 18th hole of the Tanjong layout, the two pairs carding bogey-bogey before going into the decider.

And in breaking the deadlock, Atsushi and Chiang Ling returned bogey while Gartrell and Clark were unfortunate in lapsing to a double-bogey.

Using Atsushi's drive, Chiang Ling sent the ball onto the green with a Maruman hybrid-four, and the confident three-putt was enough to gain them a ticket to Los Cabos in Mexico.

"I really enjoyed the competition today, it was a pleasure to be part of such a wonderful event.

"Right now, I'm going to celebrate and then it is back to practising for the Finals," said Atsushi, 19-handicap-index golfer.

The private investor's wife, Chiang Ling, a company director – owners of an Audi RS4 – said: "We felt no pressure as we had no expectations.

"We had competed in this competition four times, coming close once before. We kept our focus, and now we feel proud to be flying the Singapore flag."

The 29-handicap-index player, a member of Keppel Club and Raffles Country Club who has been playing golf for just over 10 years, added: "A big thanks to Audi Singapore for putting on such a well organised day. We sure will be doing our best in Mexico."

The couple, who have two girls aged 4 and 2, are keen to practise hard for the Mexico event, but the current haze has put paid to their course outings.

The Audi quattro Cup 2015, celebrating its Silver Jubilee this season, has become one of the world's most distinguished amateur golf tournaments, featuring more than 100,000 players from 53 countries.