

Strength training and good posture will keep you swinging on the golf course for many years

September 27 2017, by Jacqueline Louie



Research by University of Calgary's Dave Lindsay suggests that building strength and flexibility could extend your golfing years. Credit: Dave Lindsay

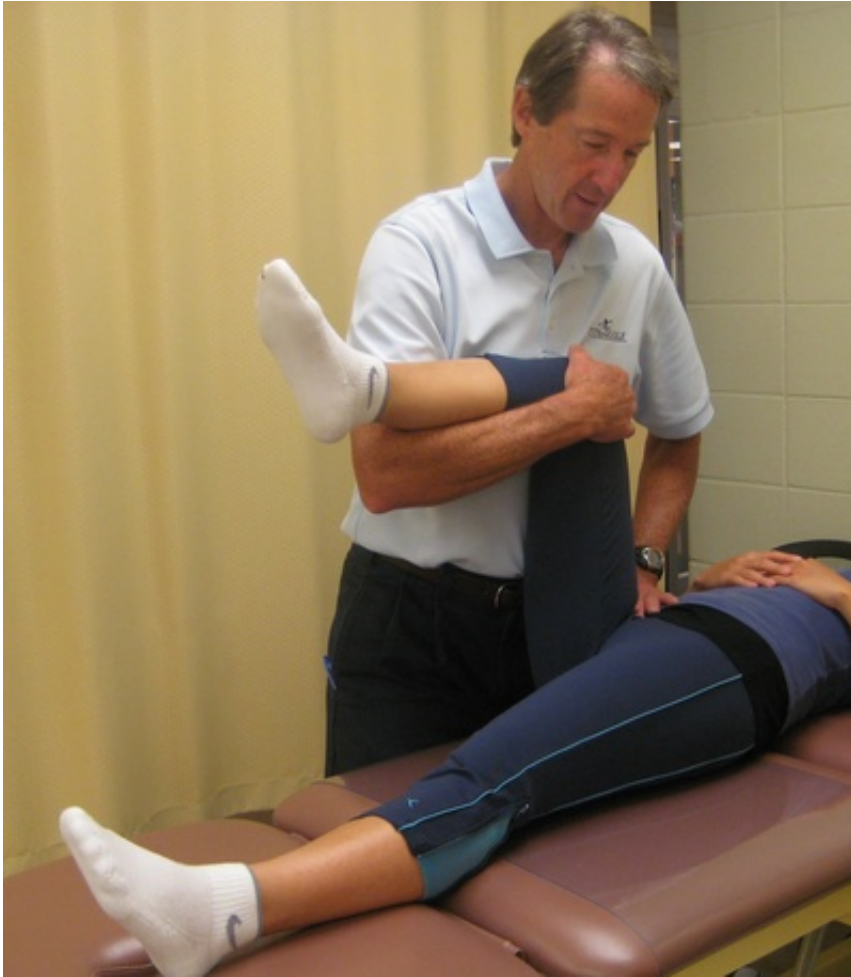
Play golf and live five years longer.

It's a simple motto, backed by Swedish research, that the University of Calgary's Dave Lindsay points to as just one of many good reasons to play [golf](#)—and to pursue any type of active healthy lifestyle. "Golf is a great pastime that gives us benefits both physically and mentally," says Lindsay, University of Calgary Sport Medicine Centre senior physiotherapist and clinical researcher in the Faculty of Kinesiology.

"Golf is something that people can do throughout life, from age three to 103," adds the international physiotherapy educator, who has been involved in clinical work and research on hip conditions and golf injuries at the Sport Medicine Centre since it opened in 1989.

The majority of Lindsay's golf [injury](#) research focuses on back pain, and on senior golfers ages 60-plus. Fifty per cent of all golfers will suffer a golf-related injury at some point during their playing life, and half of all injuries are chronic, says Lindsay, emphasizing that the key to preventing injury is a good warm-up. "Research shows that golfers who warm up for 10 minutes or more are far less likely to hurt themselves."

Lindsay's research at UCalgary has shown that improving and maintaining good posture when addressing the ball can reduce the risk of injury, particularly to the low back, and can also improve performance.



Chronic hip pain is a common complaint, says Dave Lindsay, and eliminating hip pain starts with good muscle control. Credit: University of Calgary

According to Lindsay, building strength is important, especially for older adults, who lose one to 1.5 per cent of their strength per year from about age 45 onward. Research shows that strengthening exercises can be very beneficial for senior golfers, and it doesn't have to be complicated or even specific to golf, Lindsay says.

"Research shows that any regular strengthening program helps senior golfers, both in terms of performance and injury reduction. Everyone should be on a program that includes some flexibility, a good example

being yoga. Being in a regular yoga program can be very beneficial, because yoga involves both strength and flexibility, and that will translate well to the golf course."

The hips are Lindsay's other main area of expertise. Chronic hip pain is a common complaint, and in 80 per cent of cases, the pain shows up with no obvious cause.

To eliminate hip pain, "The starting point is good [muscle control](#), because in the majority of cases that will solve the problem," Lindsay says. In most instances, it's a muscle imbalance that's causing the [pain](#) (perhaps unsurprisingly, since the hip area is surrounded by more muscles—25 in total—than any other joint in the body).

"With physiotherapy, the healing process can be ridiculously easy. For example, it can be as simple as walking better." But it takes time, typically four to six months. "It's about subconscious muscle control. Essentially, we have to break old habits."

Provided by University of Calgary

Citation: Strength training and good posture will keep you swinging on the golf course for many years (2017, September 27) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-09-strength-good-posture-golf-years.html>

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