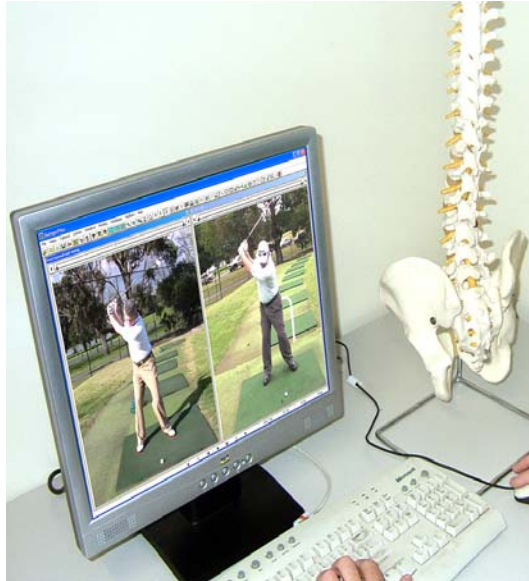


Geared Up for Golf – (Fashion over function?)

The correct golf equipment and apparel can be imperative for not only a successful but also prolonged social golfing career. However, before you start thinking about adding that new driver or putter to your wish list, let's just have a quick look at how we can make the most informed purchase decisions whilst on our quest- **to play better golf.**

Your local Pro shop or golf specialty store can help keep you up-to-date on the latest products to make golfing easier on your body. But remember, all of the following are intrinsically linked to the golf improvement process and should be considered:

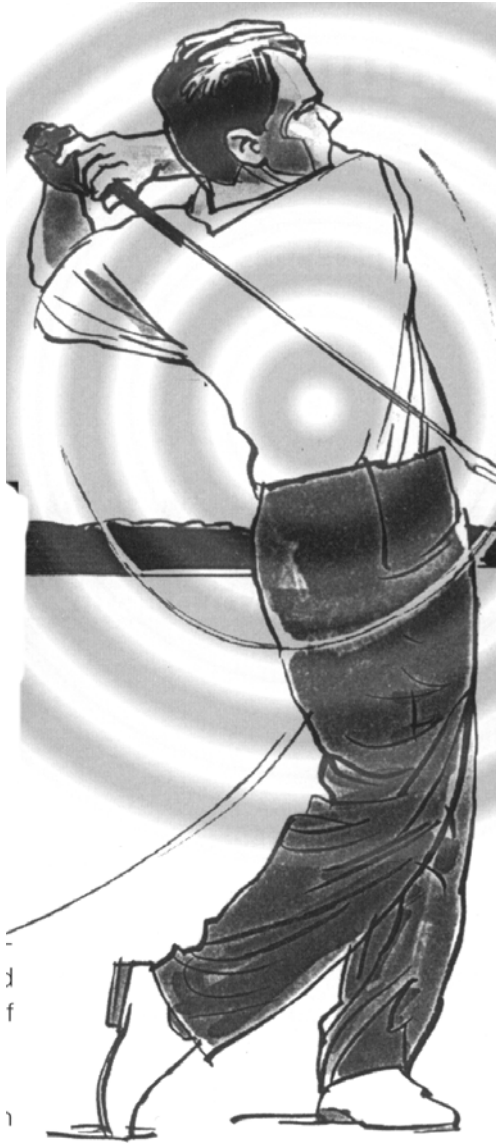


- **Golf instruction (maybe think of buying a lesson package)...**
For technique improvements, performance benefits & injury prevention
- **Custom-fitted golf equipment (ask about your shoes, clothes, grips, balls, clubs, golf bag / buggy, or any other accessories)...**
For technique improvements & performance benefits
- **Golf-specific fitness program (develop confidence in your game and peace of mind that you're taking care of your body)...**
For improved health, performance & injury prevention

Many people seem reluctant to categorise golfers as athletes. It is true, for social golfers of all ages and genders that very basic fitness levels will allow someone to participate in this sport. But to play at a consistently high level requires strength, agility, coordination and endurance.

The typical golfer walks approximately 6.5-8 kilometers per round, takes about 100 practice and actual swings, many of which are at maximum velocity, leans over 30-40 putts and bends down 40-50 times. Few would agree that this is excessive, but the variety and extremes of motion required does result in the potential for injury. While some problems are more common than others, almost any part of the body can suffer from a golf-related injury.

Golf is a unique and wonderful sport, which can be enjoyed by players of all ages and ability levels. Now, while it does have the potential to occasionally create or irritate an injury, there are a great number of things that can be done to prevent this from happening. Most of which, starts with our purchase decisions when equipping ourselves with an array of goodies that we're sure will enhance our ability to play this great game. Without a doubt the most important thing for us to remember is that we do not have to load up our bags with everything we own, every time we go out onto the course. Lighten your golf bag as much as possible and always try and wear clothing that allows you freedom of movement to swing the club, especially in cold and inclement weather.



Up to 50 per cent of senior golfers may suffer from low back pain at some stage during their playing career. The golf swing whilst not the cause of all back pain amongst players, is certainly one of the major contributors. Other factors include bending over to pick up and place balls or tees and lifting the clubs out of the car. Back pain can also be due to swing irritation of an old injury, which originally developed from something other than golf (e.g. lifting a heavy box or gardening, etc...). Irrespective of the cause, low back pain can be prevented, controlled or eliminated. All it takes is some guidance and understanding. You might consider:

- Lessons with a PGA Pro to improve your swing mechanics
- Have a club-fit with your PGA pro
- Using lighter weight graphite clubs
- Purchase a suction cup for the end of your putter to help pick up your ball after putting.
- Speak to your PGA Pro about a longer putter to decrease the load on your lower back whilst playing or practicing
- Purchase a buggy with a seat to reduce fatigue during a round
- Organise to leave your clubs and buggy at your course, or alternatively, put them into your car separately
- Lighten the weight of your bag, by taking out things you won't need for that round, e.g. practice balls, raingear-if it's sunny, etc
- Improve your strength and flexibility

Choose Function over Fashion

Most of us do take walking around the course and our feet for granted. That is, until we find ourselves developing joint pain, stiffness or swelling around the foot, ankles, knees or hips after or during our round of golf. And some of us are definitely guilty of thinking that, "as long as our shoes look good and match our outfit, we'll wear them"!

We asked Olympic podiatrist Michael Kinchington to give us an insight into why we should choose function over fashion and here's some great advice for when you think of purchasing your next set of golf shoes.

Walking is actually a complex series of movements that involve not only your feet, knees and hips, but also the spine and upper body. Your foot is also a complex marvel of engineering. Each foot consists of 26 bones, accounting for nearly 25% of the bones in your entire body. There are 33 joints in the foot, joined by 20 muscles and over 100 ligaments. This unique structure allows for flexibility and dynamic movement, while providing stability and control.

Modern golf footwear aims to protect the foot, ankles, knees, hips and back from injury. Now, whilst the right shoe can make walking around the course a pleasure. The wrong shoe can make walking and physical activity difficult. On occasions, the wrong shoe could even stir-up an old injury or make osteoarthritis pain worse.

The bottom line is that your shoes need to fit properly. The right shoe is one that suits your foot type and matches the dynamic changes in your foot shape when you walk or play golf. If you 're unsure about what type of shoe is best for you, ask your Practitioner / Podiatrist or golf retail specialist. They can assess your footwear and foot biomechanics first. Then after careful consideration, advise you of the best solution for your unique foot shape and medical condition.

Now, if you're still wondering about how you can make an impact when choosing your shoes, here's some of Michaels Hot Tips for you:

- Choose a shoe that's made for your sport
- Most injuries occur when the foot is in contact with the ground.
- So, ensure that your footwear design addresses the need for cushioning around the heel, has stability through the arch and forefoot flexibility.
- Walk tall, as good posture decreases the amount of stress placed on your joints
- Concentrate on walking with a "soft" heel strike to minimise the stress on your joints



Finally, remember to replace your shoes after 600-1000km as they lose their shock absorption qualities. **Most golf shoes only last for 100 rounds before they begin to stop supporting your feet.** Please don't hesitate to call Paul Hedger or ask your PGA Professional (Michael Faraone) for advice, if your thinking of getting geared up for golf.