

Making Golf Health & Fitness a Reality in your Practice

As Chiropractic Physicians, we regularly treat golfers and golf related injuries. Previously, in my 4-part series on working with golfers I detailed how to examine, screen, treat and prevent golf related injuries. It is now time to turn principles into application, and to do this it is imperative to discuss clinic set-up, equipment needed, protocols, and marketing. I have no doubt about your treatment protocols dealing with pain and injury, so this discussion will be limited to screening procedures and therapeutic exercise for golfers.

After completing the process of education for golf health & fitness, the next step is setting up your clinic and implementing protocols for a successful program. Implementing the knowledge and setting up your clinic to optimally work with golfers not only will yield better results, but will resonate with all golfers who experience your evaluation and treatment protocols. Golfers love to be treated specific to golf! Another benefit of this set up is that you can utilize the equipment and protocols for your other athletes and active patients.

Most Chiropractic clinics today have a small rehab room since, sadly, most insurance companies reimburse just as well for therapeutic exercise as they do manipulation, so setting all this up should be a smooth transition. A small rehab area is all that is needed to run an effective program for golfers. Obviously 1000 square feet with all the bells and whistles would be nice, but that is not always realistic. Whatever size rehab/fitness area you do have, the key is to maximize your space and to leave enough open floor space for screening procedures and functional exercises. I would recommend a rehab area of at least 250 sq ft and enough open floor space to be able to do floor exercises, gym ball exercises and to perform coordination drills.

When equipping your rehab area to work with golfers there are many options, but some pieces are a necessity. What you need to get started is a gym ball, exercise mat, light dumbbells, balance aids and some tubing. With these pieces of equipment, a golf based corrective exercise program can be prescribed to correct the golfer's posture, balance & coordination, stability, flexibility, core, and strength. In regards to the tubing, I highly recommend the Functional Movement Tubing (FMT) due to its vast applications. With the FMT and a door frame or other anchor system, you can target every aspect of the body and can get very creative.

If you have the space and wanted to take it a step further, I recommend the Free Motion cable cross machine. It does not take up much space, relatively inexpensive and you could do a total body program on this piece of equipment including fitness based exercises. As you can imagine, this is just the basics in equipping your clinic for golf health & fitness and adding golf specific training tools, cardio equipment, fitness equipment, medicine balls, etc is a great option for your clinic.



Resistance Tubing



Functional Movement Tubing



Free Motion Cable Cross

As for evaluation tools for screening golfers, I have worked with 3D motion capture systems and seen facilities utilize this, but it is not practical in the vast majority of clinics, due to its cost and space requirements. However, it is possible in some areas to find a local University who has this equipment for research purposes and therefore free if your patient agrees to be a subject. The information from 3D analysis is outstanding, but not needed in the clinical setting to evaluate and treat golfers effectively.

A more practical evaluation tool is the Video Camera. If you choose to offer Video Swing Analysis as part of your program, there are some basic requirements and accessories that you will need. The video camera you utilize should have a minimum shutter speed of 1/2000. This allows you to see the club clearly during slow motion playback to detect certain swing faults such as early release, scooping, etc. You must use a tripod when filming since you will be adding shutter speed or sports shutter to your camera and you cannot hold it still enough for quality filming. Other accessories you will need are a Firewire cable to download the video onto a computer, a small hitting mat (2' x 2'), small net, Almost[®] golf balls, and video viewing software (V1, Dartfish, JC Video).

If you do not have the space or capabilities for video swing analysis I highly recommend linking up with a golf pro or facility that would be willing to take a quick video at a low cost and burning a disc for your viewing. This should not be a problem since you can set it up so that you will refer your golfer to him for any swing technique training. I cannot stress enough the importance of understanding the golf swing injury inducing mechanics. This is vital information when determining the over-use cause of the golf-related injury. If you do not feel comfortable with interpreting the video, you can actually send them out via email to be interpreted with treatment and exercise suggestions, somewhat like sending out radiographs for interpretation.

For any further questions regarding equipment, protocols, marketing and setting up your golf health & fitness program please contact Dr. Christie at Drkchristie@healthfitgolf.com

