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WHY HEALTHY JOINTS WILL MAKE YOU A BETTER GOLFER

By Jake O'Reilly
General News

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Golf can put a huge strain on your joints, says Dr Lehel Balint, an orthopedic surgeon at BMI Droitwich Spa Hospital. So being aware of how playing a round can affect your body is vital to staying injury free, improving your game and extending your career.

"The golf swing is a physically demanding athletic movement," says Dr Balint, who specialises in hip, knee and elbow surgery including treatment for sports injuries. "Golfers require power to generate a proper swing and use muscles from the shoulders, arms, hands, fingers, hips, legs and the back. Therefore these body-parts and the joints connecting them play a major role in conducting force through the club to the golf ball."

A common injury in players is golfer's elbow - a sharp, recurrent pain on the inside part of the elbow. "When these muscles are overused, the area of origin gets inflamed and painful, this condition is known as an overuse syndrome," explains Dr Balint. The best treatments for golfer's elbow are physiotherapy, anti-inflammatory medication (gel or tablets) and wearing a splint.

However, there are preventative measures you can take to prolong your golfing career such as taking a [daily glucosamine supplement](#). This amino sugar occurs naturally in the body and works to maintain, strengthen and rebuild cartilage that cushions and protects our joints.

"Researchers think taking glucosamine supplements may either increase the cartilage and fluid surrounding the joints or help prevent the breakdown of these substances, or maybe both," says Dr Balint. Taken in supplementary form, glucosamine may be of benefit to regular players looking to avoid golfer's elbow and other joint conditions.

It is also important to stay fit and maintain a healthy weight, says Dr Balint. "Obesity accelerates the wear and tear of the joints and spine," he explains. "The pressure on knees is three times your body weight when walking and six to ten times your body weight when squatting down or climbing a hill."

If you have a known problem with any of your joints, Dr Balint recommends using a trolley for your golf bag or a buggy to help relieve some of the pressure on your body during a round.



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