

Bring Your Fitness Up to Par

Would you rather swing a golf club than swing your partner? Then perhaps golf is your course to fitness.

Golf is an outdoor game. Your goal is to use a club to send a small ball into each distant hole – preferably in as few swings as possible. No two golf courses are the same, so each one is a fresh challenge.

If you're new to the game, take lessons. They should help you learn how to pick the right club, perfect your swing, and guide your ball through such tricky terrain as high grass, sand traps, water hazards, and hills.

Be sure to plan for several expenses – you'll need clubs, golf balls, and greens fees.

The American Heart Association says golf is a good low-intensity exercise for older adults. If you're up to golfing without a cart, you may reap extra benefits. In just 20 weeks, middle-aged golfers who played cart-free about twice a week reduced their waistline, increased their HDL (good) cholesterol, and lost weight.

The study also suggests that playing golf regularly – without a cart – can strengthen your mid-body muscles and so reduce lower back problems, as well as fight general weakness, decreasing your risk of falls and fractures.

If you want to get into the swing of golf, remember these tips.

- Before you start playing, walk the course each day for a couple of weeks. It's a fine way to get used to the terrain.
- Find a driving range near you and visit it often. It's a good place to practice your golf swing.
- As part of the warm-up before any golf game, use your golf club as a stretching tool. Hold it horizontally in front of you, and, without arching your back, lift it skyward. Then bring it back down to shoulder height and gently rotate your upper body to the right and then to the left.
- Start out with a shorter backswing, progressing to a full swing as you gain strength and range of motion in your back. However, you can significantly reduce your backswing without affecting your stroke.
- Concentrate on turning your hips as you swing. This will relieve your back and improve your form.
- Improve your golf grip with an old phone book. Open the phone book and moisten your fingertips. Using one hand, press down with your fingertips, and rip, crumple, and discard one page. Alternate hands. Continue doing this until your hands are tired. You should be able to do more pages with your dominant hand. This exercise will improve grip strength, endurance, and flexibility.
- Chasing balls into the woods can raise your risk of tick-borne infections. Consider taking an extra stroke instead. At the very least, wear long sleeve and insect repellent, and be sure to check yourself over for ticks after you retrieve the ball.

If golf isn't the only sport that interests you, that's good. Activities that improve your strength, aerobic fitness, and flexibility may help your golf game, too.

Source: <http://www.articlecircle.com>

About the Author

Raymond Lee is one of the foremost experts in the health and fitness industry and is a writer specializing in body health, muscle development and dieting. He has spent countless of time and efforts conducting research and share his insightful and powerful secrets to benefit men and women all over the world. He is currently the author of the latest edition of "Neck Exercises and Workouts." Visit <http://www.bodyfixes.com> for more information. Don't forget to subscribe to his minicourse "15 Techniques & Tips Quickly Eliminate Neck Pain."