



GOLF HEALS

STAYING ACTIVE SPEEDS UP HEALING
OF ANKLE INJURY

BY ARUL JOHN

Dr Beng Teck Liang (left), 44, chief executive officer of Singapore Medical Group (SMG), and Dr Andrew Dutton (right), 42, medical director and orthopaedic surgeon, SMG Orthopaedic Group, talked at Marina Bay Golf Course about Dr Beng's recent injury and how playing golf helped his recovery.

When did you get injured and what treatment were you given?

Dr Beng: I broke my left ankle in February. I had surgery in March and eight screws were implanted in my left ankle.

Why did you decide to return to playing golf and what treatment did Dr Dutton propose when he learnt of your decision?

Dr Beng: I returned to playing golf around mid-April, despite sporting a persistent limp. Dr Dutton recommended physiotherapy to accelerate recovery by conditioning and strengthening my joints which had been stiff. Returning to play golf got me active again and my limp has gradually dissipated.

What are the common orthopaedic injuries golfers face, and why?

Dr Dutton: Common injuries include:

- pulling and tearing of tendons in the shoulders, known as rotator cuff impingement;
- injuries to the tendons in the elbow. This is caused by inadequate stretching of the limbs, stiff clubs and poor swing techniques;
- tears in the cartilaginous tissues around the knees, caused during the swinging of the club;
- back strain due to poor posture.

What are the treatment regimens for these injuries?

These include icing the injured areas, massage, cortisone injections or anti-inflammatory medicine. Golfers can also opt for physiotherapy. Autologous platelet-rich plasma, obtained by drawing the patient's own blood and centrifuging it to obtain the platelets and growth factors, can be injected back into the patient to help in natural healing. This treatment is available at SMG Orthopaedic Group and is approved by the Health Sciences Authority and US Food and Drug Administration.

What can golfers do to be less prone to these injuries?

Dr Dutton: Golfers should do the following before each game:

- warm up with stretching exercises for at least 20 minutes;
- cross training and strengthening the body;
- improve body posture and swinging techniques;
- pick golf clubs/shafts with the correct grip and size;
- use footwear with arch support and rotational control.

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