



ALL PAR FOR THE COURSE

ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEON AND
GOLFER TALKS ABOUT TREATING AND
AVOIDING COMMON GOLFING INJURIES

BY ARUL JOHN

Dr Andrew Dutton is the Medical Director and Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon at SMG Orthopaedic Group, a Singapore Medical Group (SMG) Clinic. For details, please visit smg.sg/sog

What causes injuries in golfers?

Poor swing postures or patterns can cause golfing-related injuries especially to the back, neck, shoulder, elbow, wrist and fingers. Upper limb injuries are common among golfers due to the fast-moving golf club and a relatively wide range of motion during the golf swing.

What treatments are available?

In most cases, rest, anti-inflammatory medications, platelet-rich plasma or cortisone injections, physiotherapy, infrared or ultrasound therapies are the recommended treatments.

Common golf-related injuries include:

- **Rotator Cuff Impingement**
Symptom: Pain in the shoulder or upper arm during a golf swing, and when raising the arm overhead.
Treatment: Physiotherapy.
- **Tennis' Elbow or Golfer's Elbow**
Symptom: Pain at the muscles of the forearm and the left elbow. This is usually due to tight club grip, overexertion, or hitting the club on the ground.
Treatment: Rest and apply ice. Regular stretches and forearm strengthening are essential. Other recommendations include cortisone injections, modifying your grip or swing and using a tennis elbow brace.
- **Tendinopathy**
Symptom: Wrist pain due to overexertion.

Treatment: Rest, anti-inflammatory medication, body strengthening exercises and stretches. Refine your swing.

- **Carpal Tunnel Syndrome**
Symptoms: Numbness and tingling sensations in the fingers, and weakness of hands.
Treatment: Rest, medication, splinting and surgery if required.
- **Pain at the Lower Lumbar Spine**
Symptom: Pain of various sites in the lower back.
Treatment: Physiotherapy and in rare cases, surgery.

How can golfers avoid such injuries?

- Before and during the swing, stand shoulder-width apart and ensure your weight is evenly distributed.
- Avoid hunching over the ball.
- Don't over-emphasise specific muscle groups or body areas.
- Relax and have a nice, easy swing at the ball.
- Do warming up and cooling down exercises
- Have a slow and steady start to the game to condition your body.
- Do strength training to improve club speed.
- Stretch to improve range motion.
- Do aerobic activity regularly.
- Use proper lifting techniques to lift and carry your clubs.
- Wear proper footwear.

If you have any questions about orthopaedic injuries, please send them to tnp@sph.com.sg by Sep 4, and indicate 'Queries about golf injuries' in the email heading. The doctors' replies will be in the next issue.



From left: Kelvin Kwok, Tomy Jo, Cheam Tze Shen, Akshay Maliwal, Tim Pinnegar, Darryl Wee and Nitin Talwalkar.

OLD IS GOLD FOR SICC

CAPTAIN PINNEGAR,
53, LEADS BY
EXAMPLE IN CLUB'S
QUEST FOR HONOURS

Of the 16 qualifiers for the matchplay event of last week's Singapore National Amateur Championships, 15 were aged 25 and below.

The only exception was 53-year-old Tim Pinnegar, a 1.1 handicap index golfer who is a regular face in local major competitions for the past decade or so.

And as captain of the Singapore Island Country Club (SICC) Premier Division team in the Singapore Golf Association League, Pinnegar sets the standard for the oldest golf club in Singapore.

The SICC team of 11 players have an average age of 40-plus years, and Pinnegar, who has been playing golf for 25 years, believes that experience cannot be dismissed in this sport.

The managing director of The Economist, a shrewd tactician in player combination, is seeing the fruits of his own labour and philosophy as SICC lead the overall standings in the 13-club tournament, with his Premier Division team contributing heavily by lying second to Seletar Country Club.

Citing American 51-year-old veteran Davis Love III's triumph in last week's Wyndham Championship, Pinnegar says that old can be gold.

Helping him in the successful campaign are steady golfers such as Darryl Wee, Choo Wei Pin, Kelvin Kwok, Tomy Jo and Nitin Talwalkar who have been raising their game against some established youngsters from the various national squads.

The "veterans" are ready to challenge the likes of Gregory Foo and Jerome Ng (Tanah Merah), Marc Ong, Abdul Hadi and Melvin Chew (National Service RCC) and James Leow, Lucius Toh and Leonard Toh (Seletar).

The SICC Premier Division side have 12 cumulative points, just behind Seletar Country Club (14.5).

After nine legs from nine divisions, SICC lead the overall standings with 75 Cumulative Raw Points (CRP) against Seletar's 73.5 after both clubs amassed 22 cumulative points.

The CRP is determined by the number of points amassed from the matches by a team from each division.

With four legs remaining – all matches played at neutral venues – a close finish is expected with defending champions National Service RCC (fourth with 16 cumulative points) facing an uphill battle to defend their overall title.