

Our Return To The Golf Course



Getting back into golf is an exciting prospect. None of us have played for 4 or more weeks. Therefore we need to think about how we get prepared for our return to the golf course.

Are you a causal golfer, weekend warrior, play in a few corporate events, interclub, pennants or a representative player? No matter what type of golfer you are, there is information for you below.

The risk of injuries is at its highest following a period of inactivity or no golf, similar to what we have all experienced recently. Muscles require constant movement to avoid stiffness, tension and possible strains. Tendons also play a role in absorption and transformation of forces. If movement has been reduced, getting back on the course exposes our muscles and tendons to a greater risk of injury. Of interest is the fact that the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC) reports 4,174 injuries per year that are related to golf. These injuries are classified as soft tissue strains or contusions, with the most common age range being between 35-70 years.

After a long break, such as we have experienced, the body has adapted to the different positions placed on it. Factors such as a change in work environment, ergonomic set up at home, less activity or more activity and no golf, increase the chance of muscle adaptive shortening. Muscle adaptive shortening is simply muscle tightness caused by a muscle being forced to remain in a shortened position for a prolonged period and therefore being unable to lengthen, an example being sitting in one position for too long.

To ensure our body can combat the potential stresses this period may have caused, it is even more important to incorporate a warmup routine into your game.

Studies have found a 79% increase in performance for people engaged in a physical activity, who have carried out a warmup. Golf requires short, sharp and powerful movements, all of which must be conducted within a couple of seconds. Warming up ensures muscles are not stiff, enabling a greater joint range of motion to occur. This encourages better performance and decreases the risk of injury.

Below you will find information on how you can reduce the risk of injury to ensure a successful return to golf, no matter what level of golf you enjoy playing. You will find a separate focus for the causal, weekend, corporate and for the interclub, pennants or representative player. Engaging in the right type of warm up for your level of golf provides you with the best opportunity for both an enjoyable and successful round of golf.



The three exercises below are designed to help increase circulation and oxygenation to the glutes and core muscles. These exercises are easy to implement and help reduce the chance of injury by ensuring your body is nice and warm and ready for that first tee shot.

1. Overhead squat x 10 reps



2. Standing thoracic rotation 5 x right and left sides x 2 sets



3. Birddog 2 x 5reps on right & left sides



option A – golf club

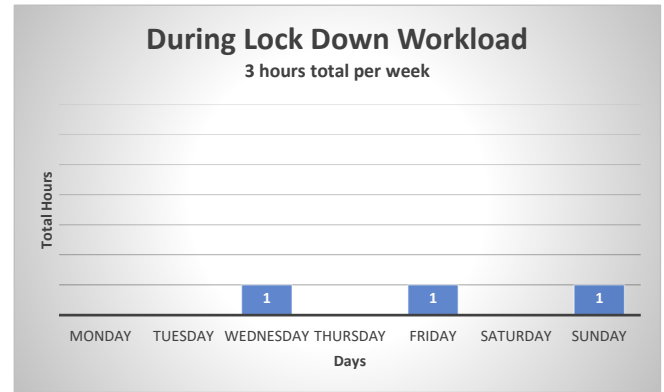
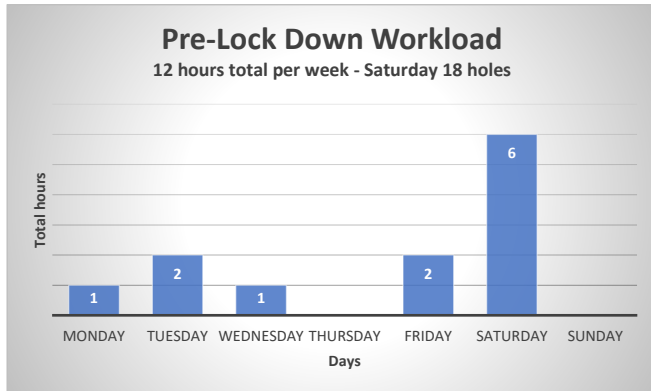


option B – resistance band

Pennants, Interclub or Representative Player:



The opportunity to get out, play and practice more golf ensures you are ready for competition when it returns. The Pre-Lockdown graph below illustrates an example of what your normal physical golf load and day to day activity may have been. However, during this current period your body has adapted to a new norm. An example is provided in the second graph during Lockdown.



The difference in physical golf workload is clear. By trying to return to your normal physical golf load too soon your muscles, tendons and ligaments will not be used to this sort of pressure. The load and stress this places on the body increases fatigue levels which results in an impaired concentration, decreased motor control and heightens your risk of injury. Putting in place a structured 'Return to Peak Golf Fitness' plan enables you to resume your normal golf routine as soon as possible, reducing the risk of injury which may occur should you return too quickly.

Over the past few weeks our workload has been altered, so you need to think about how you go about getting back into training. Load management is all about training volumes, training intensity and making sure you have that 'Return to Peak Golf Fitness' plan enabling you to achieve your best performance. Finding a balance and maintaining the correct amounts of rest, exercise and recovery is paramount to enhancing and optimising performance.

Aspects that you need to think about when you return to golf:

1. Have I maintained any specific golf related activity that supports my successful return to competition?
2. Have I considered where I need to increase my physical workload?
3. Does my plan enable me to match my pre lock down physical level?
4. Is my timeframe realistic?

The big question is what can you do at this time to reduce your chance of injury and manage that load effectively?

Work together with your team. This could be your family, coach, trainer and/or physiotherapist. Consider the following points:

1. Develop a 'Return to Peak Golf Fitness' plan to ensure a structured approach is followed. Take the time and resist the urge to return too fast.
2. Keep the training you do FUN and enjoyable

