

G.U.R. - Golfers Under Repair

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G.U.R.

Golfer Under Rehabilitation

Golfer Under Repair

Introduction

On every golf course in the world every golfer will have seen the sign with the letters G.U.R.

G.U.R., “Ground Under Repair” usually signifies a special part of the course that is not only of high importance but is such a significant facet in the functioning of the course itself it has to be given specialised treatment in order that it can return to full function.

The initials G.U.R, “Golfers Under Repair” can closely relate to regional parts of the golfers body that breakdown through injury, for example if the knee is injured it will affect the overall function of that golfer in that it will affect his / her ability to swing, walk and participate on the golf course.

Injury and underlying pathology eg arthritis, is common in golf club members around the world and leads to their inability to participate and inevitably can lead to them cancelling their membership and leaving golf altogether.

The other identical relationship that golfers have with the golf course is the way that G.U.R. is treated. It is either replaced totally with new grass specific to the area or given time; care and specialised treatment to bring it back to full function.

This is similar to a golfer who has undergone rehabilitation eg for a back injury or a hip/knee replacement.

Proper golf specific rehabilitation will promote in full restoration of the course or the golfer's body.

The aim of the Golfers Under Repair Program is to maintain the golf population within the golf community, to not only to prolong their longevity in the game of golf but also to promote enjoyment through a pain free and functional golf swing.

What are the Benefits of the G.U.R. Program?

Once the G.U.R. objectives are established the following benefits can be outlined:

1. It maintains the Club Members full registration & participation at the Club;
2. This will result in secondary investment in golf e.g. Pro Shop Merchandise, Clubs, Competition fees, Bar Fees
3. The Player feels like he/she is getting value for Money as they have continued to play at the course of their choice;
4. The Club Member feels that the Club Management and Golf Professional is providing a better service to them as a member, e.g. through duty of care providing rehabilitation facilities on site or close to the Club;
5. The Clubs and Pros maintain a good client base which may be lost through injury;

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6. The Club can begin to customise and modify the course to the needs of their membership base and by attracting new older golfers;
 7. Promoting a health awareness and “specific rehabilitation” & conditioning for golfers may encourage players/members to refer to the game or even encourage people to enjoy their golf more thus increasing participation levels;
 8. People leaving other sports eg rugby, soccer, tennis will be encouraged to cross over to golf, as they will feel that the administration within golf is addressing their individual needs.
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Practical Methodology to Promote GUR Objectives

Introduction

To promote this holistic and integrated approach there are four members of the multi disciplinary team. We have called this the “ Four ball Team”.

The members of this team include:

- The first member, the National Organization would include the Golf Union/ Association/Federation but may also include liaisons with the Arthritis Foundation and the Heart Foundation to provide up to date public information;
- The second member of the team is the sports science/ medical professionals specific to that injury or pathology;
- The third member is the PGA or the level 1 or 2 Coach;
- The fourth member is the individual golfer participating in the rehabilitation program;

There will be Four Versions/Manuals, one for each member to follow.

Summary

Building a “Four Ball Team” for all golfers under rehabilitation

The National Organisation

These include Golf Unions, Arthritis Foundation, Cancer Foundation, Heart Foundation

Sports Medicine Science

These include Specialists/ Sports medicine/ rheumatologists /orthopaedic surgeons / cardiologists / Occupational Therapists / Physiotherapists / Massage / Myotherapy / Strength and Conditioners/ Dieticians & Physiologists.

Golf Coaching

This is mainly PGA Professionals and Level 1 & 2 Coaches

The Golfer Male / Female

This includes senior, middle aged, junior, social and corporate golfers.

G.U.R. Version / Manual for Golf Coaches

Introduction

The golf coaches role is highly significant in that he/ she may be the first point of contact when the golfer either initially restricted in playing or maybe coming back post injury /surgery.

There is therefore heavy emphasis on training the coach to be more aware of the duty of care of these golfers. Emphasise should be made on communicating with golf specific medical and science professionals to ensure that their ability to understand rehabilitation guidelines within their lesson plan to members is specific and safe.

In addition to this from a pro-active point of view golf coaches can customise their teaching skills to the specific needs of the G.U.R. golfer.

The coach will be able to evolve his/ her golf drills to be more physiological in nature therefore promoting a rehabilitation system within their organization. They will also be able to graduate the loading and intensity placed on a GUR golfer.

The following headings within the manual have been selected but need to be elaborated on

- Club Fitting/selection
- Modified swings customized to the individual
- Duty of care guidelines
- Personalized service – public relations within the Pro Shop
- Marketing –Awareness of the G.U.R. Program
- Course Strategy/course shot making
- Rehabilitation drills/Pathways
 - Short game/ long game assessment
 - Bio-mechanical assessment
- Visualization techniques
 - Postural and feel drills
- Training Diary

Study into Osteo-Arthritis in Golfers

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- Including Surgery prolonging normal activity for as long as possible before an operation is needed.
 - Golf specific pre-op preparation and post-op rehabilitation
 - The effect on a golfers technical ability to play golf
 - How mobility is compromised and how golf facilities can best accommodate golfers with Osteo Arthritis
 - It is the aim of this study to start with the knee joint and then apply the same structure to all other joints in the body that are effected by this decease. It is hoped that through doctors, surgeons, physiotherapists, golf Professionals and golfing organizations working together we can come up with a range of protocols and suggestions which will keep golfers in golf and enjoying it for longer.

Why dedicate time to injured golfers

- Aging population
- Dealing with motivated people

Osteo-Arthritis and the knee joint

- What is it?
 - What percentage of people suffer from it?
 - How does it effect the knee joint?
 - What is the prognosis for sufferers?
 - Why put off surgery?
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Effects on golfer's mobility

- The main effect seems to be getting around the course
- Climbing in and out of bunkers
- Walking up and down slopes, down is harder

Effects on golfer's swings

- In the majority of cases the effect on a golfer's swing was a minimal concern
 - Some golfer's shot pattern had changed
 - Most had shortened their swings either consciously or subconsciously and felt they had lost some distance
 - Several had problems with non-flat lies
 - Two categories need forming left and right knee
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Effects on golfer's swings - left knee

- It seems that right handed golfers with bad left knees have far more problems than if it were their right knee
- The lack of ability to straighten their leg makes it hard to shift weight forward and left during impact and follow through
- Down hill lies result in a need for highly lofted clubs

Effects on golfer's swings - right knee

- The main issue with right knee arthritis is related to weight shift in the backswing
 - Force and rotation on the knee joint causes pain
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What can we as coaches do to help these golfers?

- Understand the constraints of the disease so we can come up with swing modifications
 - Have pre op and post op practice regimes to keep a golfer in touch with the game and their social network
 - Club fitting many golfers have been using the same clubs for many years and almost certainly from before they became injured
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Call for Assistance

- We are interested in any ideas or experiences
- It is good for the whole industry if we get the best outcome for golfers effected by Osteo-Arthritis

Coaching Skills Meets G.U.R.

Putting your way back into golf

Putting is often said to be the most important skill in golf however it is usually the most neglected in terms of practice. So once your doctor and physiotherapy are happy for you to, why not use your physical rehabilitation time to also work on your putting?

Due to the low impact nature of putting it can be done or adapted to be done by people with most conditions. There are four aspects to being a good putter reading greens, controlling distance, starting the ball on line and producing a repeatable stroke under pressure.

The exercises below will help you in all these areas however I suggest you first have a lesson with your local PGA golf coach on putting.

Reading greens

Many people make reading greens find it harder than it should be by using all sorts of weird and wonderful techniques.

The simplest method to keep in mind when reading greens is that course designers, when building greens have to have them drain off the surface in case of a sudden down pour. With this in mind I suggest you make a habit of approaching the green from it's lowest point, some greens have several low points in this case decide which one will most effect your ball and enter from there.

When standing on the edge of the green at the low point you can fairly assume that the ball will borrow towards you. The amount of borrow will depend on the severity of the slope, speed of the surface and the grain of the surface. Understanding these variances will come with experience.

Controlling distance

There are many different ways to practice distance control however as with most practice I like to put it into a game format to help simulate actual play.

Using a scorecard play 18 holes around the putting green with each hole being a par 2 making the par of your course 36.

Record the number of strokes you have on each hole in the first vacant column of your scorecard, a standard card from your course will do.

However in this game you must also record in separate columns the number of times you are short of the hole and the number of times you are more than one normal walking stride past the hole.

So at the end of the game when you add up your score you must also add the total number of short and long putts to your total as penalties.

The aim of the game is to help you learn to hit your putts at the correct pace to ensure you hole more and cut out the risk of three putts.

It is a good idea to keep your old score cards so you can compare not only finishing scores but also numbers of penalties to plot your improvement. Be warned this is a very challenging game and you may not like the scores you initially see.

Starting the ball on line

A string line is the simplest tool to help us start the ball on line. Using two cooking skewers tie a length of string elastic also called hat elastic between them, 3m is enough.

Starting with a straight putt place one skewer in the ground behind the hole and the other in the direction you wish to hit the putt from, creating a suspended line above the line of putt and past the hole. From here you can line up your putter and practice rolling your ball under the string.

Once you are confident with straight putts try it on breaking putts by placing the target skewer outside the hole by the amount you believe the putt will borrow and you will soon find out if you are aiming the putter properly.

You can practice this at home on the carpet by tying your string between two points about six inches above the ground and roll the ball under it. Beware not to leave it up and trip on it at a latter time.

Stroke

Rest a curtain rod or broom stick in-between two chairs and take your normal putting stance with the putter shaft resting on top of the rod. In this position your eyes should be over or just inside the ball you intend to hit.

You can test this by dropping a ball from the bridge in your nose, taking note of where it lands on the ground relative to the target ball. From this position you can practice swinging the putter back and forward with the shaft gently running along the rod. It is important not to stay bent over for extended periods of time without standing up and performing break-up stretches to avoid further injury.

Producing a repeatable stroke under pressure

It is all very well to be able to do it in practice but what about in competition?

Well, the answer is to make sure you compete on the putting green at any time you can during your recovery.

Try and get to the course before or after you normal golfing buddies play and challenge them to a competition around the green if you can get a wager out of them even better.

Chipping your way back into golf

Once your doctor and physio are happy for you to, chipping is a great low impact way to get back into playing golf after an operation or lay off due to injury. The mechanics of chipping if progressed becomes pitching which in turn can become the full swing as your rehabilitation progresses.

If combined the chipping and putting programs will have you playing to or better than your old standard in no time at all. The two drills outlined have been designed so they can be performed in your own back yard or anywhere you can legally find the space.

Leapfrog distance control

Played with two balls placed on the ground, one meter apart, with the idea being to chip the closest ball to you over the top of the next ball then the second ball over the top of the ball that was hit first.

The way to score the game is to count the number of times you can successfully chip the balls alternatively over each other in the amount of space you have available to you. At any point where you either fail to get the ball in the air or fall short of flying past your target ball you must start again.

Ladder trajectory control

To chip well you must not only be able to judge the distance your ball will fly and roll but also the trajectory it will travel on, a common garden ladder is a ideal tool to help you hone your skills.

Simply set up your ladder in a place where you have enough space between you and the ladder to account for rebounds and enough space behind the ladder to allow for the ball to finish its journey.

Using a variety of clubs see if you can successfully chip the balls through the different gaps in the rungs.

Scoring in this game is only limited by your imagination my suggestion is to count the number of shots it takes you to hit a ball through each gap provided by the ladder.

If you are more confined by space you could try hanging a net or heavy blanket on your cloths line and chip into that, by marking lines on the net or blanket it will have a similar effect as the ladder.

Lessons during rehabilitation

(Always look on the bright side of life) Monty Python. To me that song title sums up the opportunity you have while in rehabilitation to improve the scoring shots in your game.

Use the time where you are unable to hit full shots to hone your short game skills and the best way to do that is take some lessons. It is also advisable to work with your golf professional as you are able to progress to pitching then bunker play and finally to full shots to make sure your mechanics don't place you at risk of re-injuring.

Of course this should be done in consultation with the medical staff supervising your recovery.

Maintaining your social network

One of the most important aspects of getting over an injury and back into golf is by staying involved with your normal golfing groups. Listed below are ideas on how to stay involved

- Challenge your friends in a putting competition before or after your normal game
- Ride in a cart with your normal group and watch them play
- Ride in a cart chip on and putt out on each green
- Always try to be in the clubhouse for presentations
- Ask the committee if you can become involved in running the event of the day in an administration role