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"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"

Use Two Straps on Your Golf Bag

There was this woman; we'll call her Blanche, who loved golf. She felt guilty because she golfed a lot and didn't spend much time with her husband who didn't play golf. So the next time she went golfing she asked her husband if she wanted to come along and walk the course while she played. He said OK. They came to the seventh hole and Blanche hooked her tee shot. When she got to the ball there was a barn in between her ball and the green. Blanche thought for moment about her options. The barn was too tall to go over but like a lot of golfers she didn't want to take her medicine and punch back into the fairway. So she told her husband to open the front and back door of the barn – she was going to go through the barn. Her husband went ahead and opened the doors. Blanche hit her shot; her ball hit off the barn and hit her husband in the head and seriously injured him. A few months later Blanche was playing with a friend named Roni on the same course. On the seventh hole, Blanche's friend Roni hooked her tee shot. When Roni got to her ball she looked over the situation and asked Blanche if she would open the front and back doors to the barn because she was going to go through the barn. Blanche said to her friend that she might not want to do that. Roni asked why. Blanche told her that she had tried the same thing a few months ago and something tragic happened. Roni asked what happened. Blanche told her that she took a triple-bogey on the hole.

Now that you have had your chuckle and I have teased a couple of our local golfers, I will talk this week about how important a good quality golf bag shoulder strap is.

Even though today's golf clubs are made of titanium and other light alloys, packing a bag full of them over your shoulder for two to four hours straight can have a detrimental effect on you neck/shoulder region, as well as on your score.

When you carry a golf bag using a single shoulder strap, the weight of the entire golf bag and its contents are being supported by the muscles in your lower neck and shoulder blade, and only on one side of your body. These muscles are not designed to remain contracted or tightened for prolonged periods of time.

They will become tired, achy, and stiff. The more golf you play, the more these muscles will be affected. The result will be shortened and inflexible muscles on the same side you carry your bag. This muscle imbalance will definitely have a negative impact on your ability to contact the ball squarely and have a smooth full swing. On a separate note, if these muscles remain in a tightened or spastic state, it will eventually aggravate your neck. I see people every day in my office who have this same muscle problem resulting from this and many other different causes –poor posture, neck or shoulder injuries, stress, poor ergonomics at work, etc. These people all have mild to severe neck pain and stiffness, usually accompanied with dull achy headaches.

To prevent the potential pain and suffering, and perhaps even improve your overall game, purchase a “double” golf bag strap. Instead of having just a single strap applying all the weight of your golf bag over a narrow region of only one shoulder, this type of golf bag strap distributes the weight evenly over both shoulders. Although the perfect option would be to have someone else carry the bag for you, using one of these will decrease the amount of work that each muscle has to do.

To further prevent the muscles I discussed from becoming chronically tight, you should stretch them every day. I have supplied a few simple stretches for your neck on my website (www.merrittchiro.com) under “free stretches and exercises” that will suffice.