

Virtual Mentor

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VIEWPOINT

What Is Your Handicap?

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- The earliest written record of golf dates to 1457, while the earliest known written regulation of the practice of medicine is the Code of Hammurabi, in cuneiform, circa 1700 BC.¹
- In 1899, a dentist named George F. Grant patented the first golf tee. In 1922, dentist William Lowell designed a cone-shaped wooden peg with a small concave platform that was patented and became the world's first commercially produced golf tee. The most recent person to tinker with golf tee design is another dentist, Arnold DiLaura, who patented the Sof-Tee, a tee that sits on top of the ground instead of in it.
- Every year since 1890, with short pauses for world wars, an interesting interaction occurs between golf and medicine in Scotland. In 1890, the Royal Colleges Golf Club was formed. Its members are from the Royal College of Physicians (founded in 1681) and the Royal College of Surgeons (founded in 1706). Each year, the two colleges play a golf match, which has added much spice to Edinburgh medicine.
- The caloric cost of playing golf is 3.6 to 6.0 kcal/min, with total energy expenditures estimated between 622 to 960 kcal per 18 holes. Golf traditionalists espouse walking and carrying one's own clubs. Carrying golf clubs has been shown to cause a 15 percent increase in oxygen consumption, a 25 percent rise in minute ventilation, and a 10 percent increase in kcal/min expended compared with normal walking.
- In a series of experiments using highly skilled miniature golf players, researchers found that younger and older players had a similar increase in heart rate and anxiety ratings. However, under competitive conditions, younger players improved their motor performance while older players showed a decline.
- Among common recreational sports, golf is the one most often being played when death occurs. The reason is the frequency of pre-existing coronary artery disease among golfers, who tend to be male and, on average, older than those who engage in other recreational sports. At least 1 death has been recorded in an 18-year-old patient who was struck across the chest with a golf putter. At autopsy, his heart had multiple internal ruptures.
- Among anesthesiologists, the expression "to carry a full set of clubs" is used to indicate that all the equipment they need is at their immediate disposal in the operating room. Likewise, "replace your divots" means that

anesthesiologists should take care of the operating room equipment and clean up after themselves.

References

1. Brunette DD. A good walk spoiled: golf's links to medicine. *Minn Med.* 1997;80(6):25-30.

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