

# Interval Golf Rehabilitation Program

The Interval Golf Program (IGP) is designed to gradually return motion, strength and confidence in the swing after injury or surgery by slowly progressing through graduated exercises. The IGP is initiated upon clearance by the athlete's physician to resume golf specific activities and performed under the supervision of the rehabilitation team (physician, physical therapist and athletic trainer).

**Progression through the IGP takes approximately 5 weeks. Shots using full golf swings are initiated using a progression from short irons (wedge, 9-iron, and 8-iron), medium irons (7-iron, 6-iron, and 5-iron), long irons (4-iron, 3-iron, 2-iron), to fairway woods and ultimately the driver. This progression allows progression of force production. Recommend using each club with a tee and off of a mat initially to reduce the forces that can occur when creating a divot. Swings are progressed from partial to full effort. If the player progresses through the IGP without complaints, 9 holes of golf are allowed at the end of week 4 and increased to 18 holes by end of 5<sup>th</sup> week.**

The program is set up to minimize the chance of re-injury and emphasize pre-participation warm-up and stretching. In development of the interval golf program, the following factors are considered most important.

1. The act of hitting a golf ball involves the transfer of energy from the feet through the legs, pelvis, trunk, and out the shoulder through the elbow, forearm, hand and ultimately to the club. Therefore, any return to golf after injury must include attention to the entire body.
2. The chance for re-injury is lessened by a graduated progression of interval golf program
3. Proper warm-up is essential.
4. Most injuries occur as the result of fatigue and too much too soon.
5. Proper mechanics lessen the incidence of re-injury.
6. Baseline requirements for golf include:
  - Adequate time from injury or surgery to allow for healing
  - Pain-free range of motion
  - Adequate muscle power
  - Adequate muscle resistance to fatigue

Because there is individual variability among athletes, there is no set timetable for completion of the program. Most athletes, by nature, are highly competitive individuals and wish to return to competition at the earliest possible moment. While this is a necessary quality of all athletes, the proper channeling of the athlete's energies into a rigidly controlled golf program is essential to lessen the chance of re-injury during the rehabilitation process. The athlete may have the tendency to want to increase the intensity of the golf program. This will increase the incidence of re-injury and may greatly retard the rehabilitation process. It is recommended to follow the program rigidly as this will be the safest route to return to competition.

During the recovery process the athlete will probably experience soreness and a dull, diffuse aching sensation in the muscles and tendons. If the athlete experiences sharp pain, particularly in the joint, stop all golf activity until this pain ceases. If continued pain, contact your physician.

Weight Training: The athlete should supplement the IGP with a high repetition, low weight exercise program. Strengthening should address a good balance between anterior and posterior musculature so that the shoulder will not be predisposed to injury. Special emphasis must be given to posterior rotator cuff musculature for any strengthening program. Weight training will not increase distance but will increase the resistance of the arm to fatigue and injury. Weight training should be done the same day as you do these IGP activities; however, it should be after your daily exercises are completed, using the day in between for flexibility exercises and a recovery period. A weight training pattern or routine should be stressed at this point as a “maintenance program.” This pattern can and should accompany the athlete into and throughout the season as a deterrent to further injury. It must be stressed that weight training is of no benefit unless accompanied by a sound flexibility program.

Individual Variability: The IGP is designed so that each level is achieved without pain or complications before the next level is initiated. This sets up a progression in which a goal is achieved prior to advancement rather than advancing to a specific timeframe. Because of this design, the IGP may be used for different levels of skills and abilities from those in high school to professional levels. Progression will vary from person to person throughout the IGP. **“Listen to your body – it will tell you when to slow down.”** Again, completion of the steps of the IGP will vary from person to person. There is no set timetable in terms of days to completion.

Warm-up: We recommend 1 set of 10 repetitions of RTC be performed prior to IGP. Jogging may also assist in warm-up. Jogging increases blood flow to the muscles and joints thus increasing their flexibility and decreasing the chance of re-injury. Since the amount of warm-up will vary from person to person, the athlete should jog until developing a light sweat, then progress to the stretching phase.

Stretching: Since golf involves all muscles in the body, all muscle groups should be stretched prior to golf. This should be done in a systematic fashion beginning with the legs and including the trunk, back, neck and arms. Continue with capsular stretches and L-bar range of motion exercises.

Swing Mechanics: A critical aspect of the IGP is maintenance of proper swing mechanics throughout the advancement. The golf pro (if available) may be valuable allies to the rehabilitation team with their knowledge of proper swing mechanics.

Summary: In using the Interval Golf Program (IGP) in conjunction with a structured rehabilitation program, the athlete should be able to return to full competition status, minimizing any chance of re-injury. The program and its progression should be modified to meet the specific needs of each individual athlete. A comprehensive program consisting of a maintenance strength and flexibility program, appropriate warm-up and cool down procedures, proper swing mechanics, and progressive intensity of play will assist the golfer’s safe return to competition.

## INTERVAL GOLF REHABILITATION PROGRAM

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Week 1</b>	10 putts 10 chips 5-min rest 15 chips	15 putts 15 chips 5-min rest 25 chips	20 putts 20 chips 5-min rest 20 putts 20 chips 5-min rest 10 chips 10 short irons
<b>Week 2</b>	20 chips 10 short irons 5-min rest 10 short irons 15 medium irons (5-iron off tee)	20 chips 15 short irons 10-min rest 15 short irons 15 chips Putting 15 medium irons	15 short irons 20 medium irons 10-min rest 20 short irons 15 chips
<b>Week 3</b>	15 short irons 20 medium irons 10-min rest 15 short irons 15 medium irons 5 long irons 10-min rest 20 chips	15 short irons 15 medium irons 10 long irons 10-min rest 10 short irons 10 medium irons 5 long irons 5 wood	15 short irons 15 medium irons 10 long irons 10-min rest 10 short irons 10 medium irons 10 long irons 10 wood
<b>Week 4</b>	15 short irons 15 medium irons 10 long irons 10 drives 15-min rest Repeat	Play 9 holes	Play 9 holes
<b>Week 5</b>	Play 9 holes	Play 9 holes	Play 18 holes

\* Chips = pitching wedge; short irons = wedge, 9-iron, 8-iron; medium irons = 7-iron, 6-iron, 5-iron; long irons = 4-iron, 3-iron, 2-iron; woods = 3-wood, 5-wood; drives = driver.