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# The Key Health Benefits of Golf



Golf is played by around 55 million people on 32,000 courses in over 200 countries. This is pretty impressive, but even more so is the fact that all of these people could actually be substantially benefiting their health in the process!

These health benefits are not just unique to the professional players either, in fact, former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George viewed less talented golfers as reaping more benefits than those bestowed upon the likes of Rory McIlroy & Annika Sorenstam:

“Golf is the only game where the worst player gets the best of it. He obtains more out of it as regards both exercise and enjoyment, for the good player gets worried over the slightest

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years longer than those who do not play golf, regardless of age, gender, or socio-economic status. Evidence also suggests that golf has a role in preventing and treating many chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, and through regular use can help strengthen bones and prevent hip fractures.

A 2006 study found that around 12,000 steps are taken per 18-hole round, exceeding the commonly recommended daily amount of steps for health. However, cart use reduces walking distance from an average 8+km to 3.86km per round – so ditch the golf cart if you want the same benefits!

The benefits aren't only limited to physical health either, with psychological benefits including improved mood, reduced anxiety and increased confidence. Likewise, golf is known to boost social connections and self-esteem – meaning that you might be missing a trick if you're not out on the course.

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## Was David Lloyd George right?

There is clear evidence that regular physical activity, in the form of golf, increases life expectancy. And although Lloyd George was correct that the benefits can be accrued by players of all abilities, research suggests that low handicap players tend to play more often and have the lowest mortality rates. Encouraging friends, family, and patients to take part in regular physical activity is time well invested, and golf can offer significant benefit to Joe and Jane Public, Gary Player and Brooke Henderson alike. Walk the course if you can!

Reproduced from the British Journal of Sports Medicine, Griffin, Hawkes, Murray.

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