Best Warm-Up for Golfer’s Knee Pain Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Why Golfers Shouldn't Ignore Knee Pain

Your doctor told you to stop playing golf. He was wrong. Now, before anyone thinks that I'm out here trying to throw my colleagues under the bus, he probably meant well.

he was probably trying protect you, but the rest and see how it feels is not a treatment plan. It is a waiting room. And while you were sitting in that waiting, your knee stayed exactly the same.

Then your game went cold and your Saturday mornings happened with your group without you. That stops today. My name is Dr. Gayan Puvendran. I am a medical doctor that specializes in sports and regenerative medicine.

For the last 15 years, I have helped thousands of golfers conquer their knee pain without resorting to invasive surgery. Today, By the end of this video, you're going to understand your own knee better than you did when you walked in.

And you are also going have a strategy, not just a shrug. Are you ready for it? Alright, let's go.

Patient Story: Arthritis, Shots, and Giving Up Golf

Actually, before we get into it, if you want something that you can put to use immediately, I put together a free 5-minute warm-up guide specifically for golfers with knee pain.

It's called the Ready for T-Off Guide and you grab it right now at ReadyForT-off.com. It is absolutely free, there are no strings attached. Just go get it and come back.

I'll be right here. Okay, welcome back! Let me tell you about a patient of mine that I see in my clinic. He's in his early 50s, he runs his own company.

Golf, for him, is not just a hobby. It's where his deals get made, it's when his friendships get real, and for four hours every Saturday or Sunday morning, the rest of the world finally shuts up.

Unfortunately, his knee started bothering him about eight months ago. It was nothing dramatic at first. There was a dull ache on the inside of the joint, but it was only on back nine.

So he ignored it because, well, that's what guys like him do. Then it started creeping in earlier. THEN he started quietly changing his swing without even realizing it, just so he could get through 18 holes without limping off the green.

So he went to go see a doctor, he got an x-ray. He heard the words moderate arthritis. That was the doctor's way of saying that the wear and tear is building up inside the joint and he ended up walking out with a cortisone shot.

Now this steroid injection knocked the inflammation down fast. It helped. he felt great for a while. that while was about six weeks. Then he didn't feel good.

So, what does he do? He goes back. Maybe he got another shot, which he did. And then, somebody along the line started floating the idea of surgery. Somewhere in that appointment, between the waiting room and the door out, the doctor said, you may want to take a break from golf.

He did, because what else are you supposed to do. Then six weeks later, the knee feels exactly the same. And now, not only that, you haven't played in a month and a half and you feel worse in ways that have nothing to do with the joint.

You feel older. He felt sidelined. he felt less like himself. That guy walks into my office and I have one thing that I need him to understand right away.

Nobody gave him the full picture. And today, we're going to change that. Here's what's happening inside your knee when you walk to the first tea cold.

This means no warm up, no prep. Just shoes on, gloves on. First tea. Your joint fluid, the liquid inside you knee that acts like motor oil for the whole thing.

What Happens to the Knee on a Cold First Tee

evenly distributed yet. The cartilage inside your knee, that's smooth, rubbery material like the shiny white end of a chicken bone. That's what keeps the bone from grinding bone on bone that needs that fluid to absorb before it can handle the load.

And it absorbs that through movement. Slow, gradual, progressive movement that tells the joint, we're going to work today. It is time to get ready. Now, when you skip that and you go straight to a full golf swing, You're essentially starting your car in January and immediately flooring it on the highway.

That engine can technically handle it, but you know that over time it's going to cost you. Now here's the part that makes me genuinely frustrating. A 2022 study published through the National Institute of Health or the NIH, this is the gold standard of American medical research, looked at exactly what happens to a golfer's knee during the swing.

They found that the lead knee, that's your front knee the one closest to the target, It absorbs enormous rotational force on every single downswing. It doesn't just bend, it twists over and over again.

18 holes every round, every year. And here's what the research confirmed. The muscles around your knee, the quadriceps in the front of your thigh, The hamstrings in back of the thigh.

the glute muscles in your butt. Those act as shock absorbers. So when those muscles are warm and they're activated, they share the load. They protect the joints.

When they are cold, the joint takes the full hit by itself. Now, I am a sports medicine doctor who plays golf. Poorly I'll admit, but even I had to re-examine my pre-round habits after reading this research, because my warm-up used to look like this.

Walk to the parking lot, or walk from the park lot to first tee. Turns out, that doesn't count. Who knew? Additionally, a 2024 Northwestern University study followed golfers that had real, documented knee arthritis, and they tracked what happened during actual rounds.

The findings were clear. Walking the course did not damage the joint. Movement was not the enemy. But the researchers also noted that how you prepare matters, because an unprepared joint under repetitive load are how joint damage occurs and accumulates.

Research on Swing Forces and Knee Protection

Then there's the mechanical side. That same 2022 NIH study found that rotating your lead foot outward at address, that means pointing those toes out towards the target between 25 and 40 degrees, reduced the peak rotational stress on the knee significantly.

A small change in setup that immediately changes how much load your joint has to absorb on every single swing. None of this is complicated and all of it is actionable and almost none of was in the room when my patient got his cortisone shot.

Here is the one behavior change that I want you to take from this video. I want you to do a five-minute knee-focused warm-up before every single round, instead of just walking cold to the first tee.

That's it. Five minutes before you ever touch a club. And here is why this is one of the highest return investments that you can make in your game and your body.

Reason number one. When you warm up your supporting muscles before a round those muscles absorb a meaningful share of force that your knee would otherwise have to take away.

So your quads, your glutes, or your hamstrings, they become the buffer. The joint stops being the first line of defense and becomes the last. More rounds, less pain, and less damage compounding quietly over a seat.

And if you don't, well, then that rotational force lands directly on a cold, unprepared joint. Every swing, 18 holes, 108 swings minimum. Well, that's my round anyway.

A joint was not designed to absorb that force alone. Reason number two. A proper warm-up tells your body that you're still an athlete. Not in a soft feel-good Disney movie sort of way, but in an actual physiological response.

It activates your motor patterns. It sharpens your proprioception. The propriocession, that's your body's ability to sense where it is in space and to stay balanced.

And it also helps wake up the neural connections between your brain and your muscles. You step onto the first T sharper, more stable, and more in control of your strain mechanics.

The 5-Minute Knee Warm-Up Routine

And if you skip it, well, then you spend the first four holes working the rust out with a knee that hasn't been told this time before. Reason number three.

Here is what a five minute warm up actually looks like. It's specifically designed for a need that needs preparation and not punishment. You start with standing hip circles, so feet shoulder width apart, hands on your hips, slow circular motions through the hip joint in both directions.

30 seconds each side. This primes your hip to rotate cleanly so that your knee doesn't have to compensate for a stiff hip on the downswing. Next up is a standing spinal rotation.

Cross your arms over your chest, feet planted, and rotate left and right gently. This is not a full swing yet. You're just waking up the mid-back because when your thoracic spine, that's the middle section of your back, rotates freely, your knee absorbs less rotational force on the follow-through.

Next, shallow bodyweight squats. Now, feet shoulder width apart, toes slightly flared out, lower slowly into like a quarter squat depth. You don't have to go all the way down.

Then you press yourself back up. 10 reps. What this does is this activates your quads and your glutes simultaneously, and it also begins distributing the joint fluid throughout your knee before you start to load it.

This probably is the one exercise that makes the biggest immediate difference on a cold morning. Next up is standing leg swings. So you're going to hold a club or the cart for balance and you are just going swing your lead leg forward back and forth like a pendulum.

Do 30 seconds and then change to your trail leg. This opens up the hip flexors and the hamstrings dynamically without straining your knee and it also directly prepares the exact movement pattern that you need on the backswing pivot.

And then finally, a toe out single leg balance. So you stand on your lead leg, toes rotated out that 25 to 40 degrees,

you bend your knees slightly, and you hold your balance for 20 to 30 seconds.

This is the exercise I care the most about for your knee health. It trains your stabilizing muscles to hold the lead knee in its correct alignment during the exact moment in your swing where it takes the peak force.

One exercise that connects directly to the NIH data before you even hit a shot. Five exercises, five minutes, done in the parking lot, at the backdrop, or even right at first tee.

Nobody has to know what you're doing. It just looks like you are warming up like somebody who knows what they are doing, and now you do. Reason number four.

Let me be straight with you about what happens when this doesn't happen. Not as a scare tactic, but as friend who has seen this pattern many many times.

The damage from an unprepared, repetitive loading doesn't announce itself dramatically, it accumulates quietly. You feel a little bit worse after each round, the core zone stops lasting, that surgeon's timeline starts sounding less like a distant possibility and more like scheduled inevitability.

A five-minute warm-up is not just pre-round maintenance. It is one of the most concrete actions that you can take right now to keep that surgical conversation off the table.

And the flip side, guys who build this habit consistently tell me the same thing. They play more rounds, not fewer. The joint responds to preparation, the body adapts, so Saturday mornings with your buddies keeps happening.

When to Consider PRP and Next Steps

And reason number five, when you show up to the first tee feeling prepared when your knee doesn't start talking to you on the whole floor, you play differently.

And you think about your game, your not thinking about you joint, thinking the bet, the skin, not managing your discomfort. You close the deal on 18 instead of quietly hopping off just to survive the round.

That is not a small thing, that is everything. And for those of you whose knee is inflamed enough that a five-minute warm-up feels like it barely touches the surface, that is the moment to start having a real conversation about PRP.

Platelet-rich plasma, your own blood drawn from your arm, spun down in a machine that concentrates your body's natural healing factors and then is injected directly back into the joint.

This is not masking inflammation the way cortisone does, this is actually giving the tissue what it needs to repair, what is needs, to heal. The warm up that we talk about works the best when the tissues underneath is also getting the support that it deserves.

Here is your one thing to do today before your next round. Try that toe-out single leg balance. Actually, try it right now. Stand up wherever you are.

Lead leg, toes rotated out about 20 to 30 degrees, slight bend in your knee, and just try to hold it for 20 seconds. If you felt your stabilizing muscles engage your inner thigh, your glute, or side of your hip, you just activated the exact system that's protecting your lead knee during your downswing.

If you wobbled, that's okay. Because most guys who do this the first time, That wobble gives us information. That information that tells us that your stabilizers are undertrained.

And they are probably part of the reason why your knee is taking on more load than it should every single swing. 20 seconds, one leg, right now. Now that full routine that I talked about is in the ready for tee-off guide.

But it starts here with that one, Right now, today. Look. If this video gave you one thing that changes how you think about that knee before your next round, then it did exactly what it was designed to do.

If you found this videos useful, follow my channel. Please help me out. Every week I'm putting out real information, straight talk, zero fluff for golfers who are done accepting vague answers.

And if you've got a guy in your group, the one that started writing the cart when he used to walk, or the ones that's been making excuses about his schedule when everybody knows it's his knee, share this with him.

He probably hasn't said anything yet because he's too proud. But he does need to hear this. And before you go, grab that free Ready for T-Off warm-up guide at ReadyForT-off.com.

Five minutes before your round. That's all it takes. Your knee will feel the difference the moment you step onto the first tee. I'm Dr. Guyen Puvendin.

Take care of those knees and I'll hopefully see you pain-free in the fairway.