



## PROfiles: Golfer's Spine

So much is said about posture and the spine in golf that they must be important. The spine is a dynamic system of 26 bones and hundreds of muscles that move those bones and joints in specific ways. We all know that the 'spine angles' are very important to the swing. Getting the body to maintain these angles throughout the swing is a very difficult task. Many golfers have weak muscles and muscles that are adhered or 'stuck' to other muscles. This is particularly critical in the spinal muscles. I do not like to use the term 'back muscles' because it is not specific or descriptive enough.

There are three primary layers to the 'back muscles', those closest to the spine are small and numerous and are responsible for stabilizing bone-to-bone movements, the next layer is the long muscles next to the spine, these function primarily to maintain posture, top keep you upright. The third layer is the top most layer, muscles you may have heard of like 'traps', or 'lats'. The third layer moves things like your head and arms. It is this layer that produces the power in the upper body during the golf swing. The problem is in the deeper layers. Deeper layers function to stabilize the spine and counteract the power muscles. They are frequently deconditioned (tight and weak) and do not effectively do their job. The result is back pain, poor posture and poor swing mechanics.

Standing, sitting, moving and resisting gravity on a daily basis weakens and fatigues the deep spinal muscles. The result is that the larger muscles begin to tighten. The shoulders and low back get tight and inflexible, a chain reaction that destroys your ability to effectively swing the golf club. The solution is to restore the proper function of the spinal muscles at the deep layers. When these muscles get tight they 'stick' together, further limiting their motion. To correct the problem they must be 'freed-up' or 'unstuck'.

Using **Active Release Techniques**® is the most effective way I have found to correct the adhesions that limit flexibility, strength and power. **ART**® is a manual hands-on treatment that is muscle and movement specific. It is possible to play golf without back pain, if you condition your spinal muscles correctly and remove the existing problem areas with ART®.