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## Play Golf Forever

by Michael Jaffe, DO; Brian Tarcy (sportswriter) and Ron Brizzie, DO

Review by Bruce E Bekkar, MD

Filled with clear, concise descriptions, practical advice, and simple instruction, *Play Golf Forever* uses this popular sport as a way to address the chief cause of disability for many of us: low back pain (LBP). Most importantly, the book provides an effective map to recovery from this difficult problem.

Michael Jaffe, DO, an experienced physiatrist with the Southern California Permanente Medical Group in San Diego, Brian Tarcy, and Ron Brizzie, DO lighten the physiology lecture with real-life examples of famous golfers as well as some ordinary patients. Their statistics reassure us that although back pain is very common, most people improve without treatment, and that less than 1% of LBP is due to life-threatening illness or requires major surgery.

*Play Golf Forever* is divided into three sections: The Back, The Game of Golf, and The Program. In the first section, the authors explain how we express ourselves through movement of our bodies, and how complex those movements really are. Then, they define “functional training,” the revolutionary new approach to sports fitness, and why it works so well. We learn how both prevention of injury and recovery are not based on bed rest, but on getting moving again.

Next, the authors describe the four basic causes of LBP and how they relate to playing golf. The book clarifies how to recognize when back pain requires immediate medical attention (thankfully not often) and details effective treatments, from medications

and injections to electrothermal therapy, and, as a last resort, surgery. After establishing a firm foundation, the authors analyze the golf swing itself, dividing it into specific components to improve performance.

In the final section, we learn that it’s better to do the most challenging exercises first, because sports injuries occur more often when we’re tired. Another helpful chapter describes the proper way to do many basic movements—including sitting, standing, getting up, even lying in bed. We see that doing simple physical activities correctly can protect and strengthen us over time.

Finally, they lay out “The Program.” Simply put, this set of low-tech but challenging exercises can change your life, golfer or not. My brief experience in working with Dr Jaffe has taught me that functional training improves all sports and balance activities I’m involved with, and pays off quickly. If you fill this exercise prescription, you get results, period. The program includes chapters on stretching before being active, and “low impact” modifications for those needing a slower start back to fitness.

To sum it, *Play Golf Forever* gives golfers of the world a tremendous gift: not only to play longer, but to play longer (ie, hit the ball farther); a link from relief of pain all the way to their “Inner Tiger” (or Annika). For the rest of us, this easy read is a powerful guide to injury prevention and substantially improved performance in whatever we do. As the authors say, “motion is life.” Now we have a clear guide to doing it right. ❖

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### Loyalty

There is no friend as loyal as a book.

— Ernest Hemingway, 1899-1961, American novelist, short-story writer, and journalist.