

QA

TIPS FOR LIVING BETTER WITH ARTHRITIS



After replacing a worn-out joint, many people see an improvement in their athletic performance!

PLAYING SPORTS WITH A NEW KNEE

Q I love golf and tennis but need a knee replacement soon. After I recover, is it okay to go back to playing my favorite sports?

A Odds are good that you can go back—with your surgeon's approval. Many people can enjoy playing their favorite sports again and even see an improvement in their performance after replacing the worn-out joint. A few tips: When you return to golfing, use a riding cart and play nine holes to start. When you feel comfortable enough to walk, use a pull cart rather than carrying your bag. For tennis, try playing doubles. Singles

tennis requires more running and rapid change of direction, which may cause loosening of the new joint from the bone. Also, ask your physical therapist for tips that will help get you back into the swing of things.

—**Robert Marx, MD**, professor of orthopedic surgery, Hospital for Special Surgery, Weill Cornell Medical College, New York

RELIEF FOR 'TECH NECK'

Q My neck is really stiff and sore. I often use my laptop and smartphone for work—could that be the problem? What can I do to minimize pain?

A Some call it the “digital hunchback”—the common stance of tech users who are always connected. Marked by a stiff neck, knots in the shoulders and headaches, the pain arises when the head is pushed forward away from the body's center. This constant scrunching of the upper body can increase the risk of pinched nerves, bone spurs and degenerative disk disease. A common cause of neck strain: Placing a laptop on a table and resting your elbows on it while typing. Instead, use a chair with arm rests to support your elbows while typing, and keep shoulder blades in contact with the back of the chair as much as possible. Also, using an adjustable docking station with full-sized keyboard can be helpful, since it allows you to place your laptop on a stand at eye level. If you read on a smartphone or tablet, try to hold it as close to eye level as possible. To promote good posture and relieve eyestrain, take a break at least once an hour and focus on something far away for a minute or so. Finally, stretching your arms, neck and shoulders at least once a day at work will help keep muscles flexible.

—**Sridhar Yalamanchili, PT, MSPT**, director of rehabilitation at Atlantic Spine Center, River Edge, NJ