

From our President & CEO



Ms. Angelique Berg

A tenet of the Foundation's Because You Can strategy is encouraging lifelong physical activity, and this issue focuses on a great spring choice: golf.

Playing for the love of the game is great for me,

because my score provides little inspiration! What does, however, is playing with my husband and our son, Hayden.

Hayden has cognitive and physical challenges. When he was little, a physiotherapist explained that he expends incredible energy just standing upright, never mind anything else. The great thing about a lot of kids is that if you don't tell them they have limitations, the limitations tend not to stand in their way. Hayden learned to ride a bike, in-line skate, swim, play hockey, and last year, joined us at the driving range.

While Hayden didn't think so, we thought the first visit to the driving range was hilarious! Predictably, he was frustrated. With humour and patience, we helped him get "the swing of things". By the next visit, Hayden was fascinated by sending the little white ball sailing through the air. This year, we're looking forward to playing on a course together for the first of what we hope will be a lifetime of rounds.

We'd like to hear what activities you choose to keep your bones and joints strong. Write to us about your choices and inspirations, and send them by mail (address inside) or email to mailbox@canorth.org. Letters should be a maximum of 300 words, and include your full name and contact information. You might see your story in a future issue or on our website, and inspire others to a lifetime of movement!

Back in the Swing

By: Stuart Foxman, Freelance Writer

Sixteen years ago, when he was 44, Bert Firlotte of Fredericton, New Brunswick completed one of the most satisfying rounds of golf of his life. Did he break his personal best? Get a hole-in-one? Firlotte's pride had nothing to do with his score, but with simply getting through the round without discomfort.

"Going back to the clubhouse," he recalls, "I remember thinking, 'I walked the whole thing!' To be able to do that without pain was so gratifying."

Months earlier, Firlotte had undergone his fourth and last hip replacement. He had his first at age 25, seven years after he broke his hip in a car crash, and arthritis set in. "I had very little movement – it was just bone on bone."

Firlotte, now a maintenance supervisor for New Brunswick Power, only took up golf after his first hip surgery. He always enjoyed the game, but in the period between his third surgery (at 37) and his fourth, playing golf – or even just walking – became problematic.

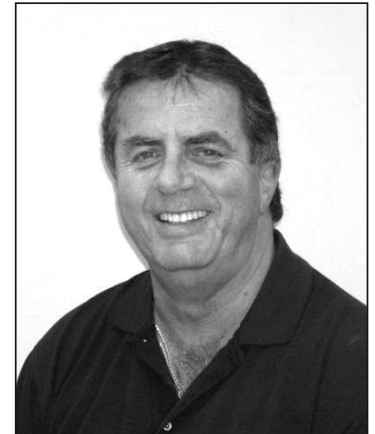
"I was limping, which was affecting my lower back too, but I got used to the pain," he says. "Eventually, the pain got so bad that I couldn't function anymore. It kept me up at night."

Golf was a good indicator of Firlotte's progress. Before his last surgery, he had used a cart to get around the course, as there's no way he could have walked 18 holes. His surgery was on his left hip, his lead hip when he swings. After his surgery, when he got up to the tee he didn't even give it a second thought.

"It's incredible how much better you can feel in such a short period," says Firlotte.

Firlotte, a member of the Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation's Volunteer Advisory Board, urges anyone who's facing a joint replacement to embrace the prospect. And he knows of that which he speaks: two years ago, he had a knee replacement, too. "It's like," he says, "turning back the hands of time."

That kind of reaction doesn't surprise Dr. Ross Leighton, who performed Firlotte's last hip replacement. Whether the outcome is the ability to engage in a favourite form of recreation, or to simply go about routine activities, "getting rid of pain that is chronic or occurs on a daily basis," says Dr. Leighton, "is so profound a change as to be priceless."



Mr. Bert Firlotte



Surgical GPS

By: Stuart Foxman, Freelance Writer

What's better when driving: stopping at a gas station every few kilometres for directions, or relying on a GPS? Which gets you to your destination most precisely and efficiently? The answer is obvious – when it comes to surgery too.

A procedure like inserting screws in the pelvis and hip typically involves taking x-rays, and using those cues to determine where to put the hardware. During the procedure, more x-rays are taken to ensure the surgeon is in the right spot. Computer navigation eliminates that. X-rays taken at the outset are saved in a computer system. In surgery, the software tells you where you are in the bone. The result – more precise implants, with patients exposed to fewer x-rays.

In the hands of expert surgeons, such software is an effective tool. The question, says Dr. Markku Nousiainen, an orthopaedic surgeon at Toronto's Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, is how will novice surgeons perform if computer navigation is on their curriculum?

That's what he's exploring through a project that earned the Canadian Orthopaedic Research Legacy (CORL) Award. In one group of medical students at the University of Toronto, half are training in conventional techniques for femoral neck screw insertion (screws across a broken hip), half in computer navigation.

The study isn't over, "But if we can prove that we get better learning and better outcomes," says Dr. Nousiainen, "the argument can be made to include computer navigation in the training for surgical residents."



Dr. Markku Nousiainen

CORL Award sponsored by:



In The News

National Volunteer Week: During the week of April 20, the Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation saluted the hundreds of volunteers – fundraisers, ambassadors and peer support volunteers – who make our work possible. Thank YOU for helping to keep Canadians moving longer and stronger!



Ortho Connect Launch: April 21 marked the start of a national media campaign sponsored by Bayer Healthcare to let the country know about Ortho Connect, the Foundation's free, telephone-based peer support program, available to patients facing any kind of orthopaedic surgery. Foundation spokespersons were interviewed on talk radio programs across the country, bringing awareness of the program to people who can most benefit from it. Want to volunteer? See opposite page for more detail.

Good News for Patients: Patients undergoing knee and hip replacement surgery received a dose of good news in April with the Saskatchewan and Alberta governments' decision to reimburse Xarelto® (rivaroxaban), a once-daily oral preventative treatment for venous thromboembolic events (VTE), or blood clots that can occur following major orthopaedic surgery.

Fore! Watch Out for Golf Injuries

When Tiger Woods won the 2008 U.S. Open on a bum knee – he announced days later that he needed ACL surgery – it only bolstered his legend. It also highlighted the injuries that can befall any golfer, from Tiger to the weekend hacker.

For most golfers, the risk of injury comes from repetitive motion, explains Dr. Ross Leighton, orthopaedic surgeon and Professor of Surgery at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Common damage can include pressure on the leading elbow (medial epicondylitis or “golfer’s elbow”); overuse or tearing of the rotator cuff in the shoulder; lower back strain or herniated discs; and bursitis or pain around the hip girdle.

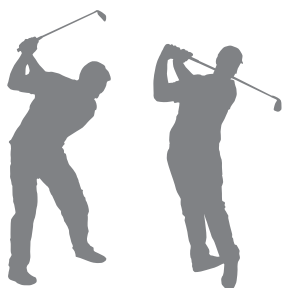
Dr. Leighton explains that treatments can range from icing and anti-inflammatories in the vast majority of cases, to steroid injections for bursitis or rotator cuff tears, to surgery for a very small minority. Surgery to elbows and shoulders are most common for golfers.

Know the warning signs: Aches and pains can be normal after a round, are usually generalized, and typically go away in 24-48 hours. So watch out for sharp pains during your swing, localized pain, or pain that lasts over 48 hours – they can be warning signs that it’s time to see a doctor.

Swing into Spring

Returning to golf after you’ve had an injury or surgery demands patience and a plan. Here’s how to get back in the swing.

- **Consciously progress.** Go to a range to pitch and putt, and be aware of how your body feels. “Progress from wedges to irons, then to woods, only when you feel the right range of motion and the swing is pain-free,” says Dr. Erin Boynton of Toronto.
 - **Post-surgery, be mindful of weak spots,** says Mike Ranger, a physiotherapist at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario. “Some areas have to be strengthened, like your abductor muscles after a hip replacement, or your quadriceps and hamstrings after knee surgery.”
 - **Don’t rush.** “You can’t speed biology – your body heals at a certain pace,” says Dr. William Stanish of Halifax. When are you ready? When you can play pain-free, he says. Come back too quickly, and you just risk going back on the bench.
- The great thing about golf is that with proper treatment for injuries – or with the right precautions and preparations in the off-season, between rounds, and on the course – you can play the sport for life. “You can keep going forever,” says Dr. Stanish, “and that’s the great sell.”



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A Booming Drive... to Prepare

For golfers, staying on course depends on what they do off the course. The right fitness and exercise routine during the off-season and between rounds can reduce injuries.

- Work on your flexibility and core strengthening, says Dr. William Stanish, a Halifax orthopaedic surgeon. A month before playing for the first time, start with back and shoulder stretches. Swing a club at home, nice and easy, to get used to the motion. Ask a doctor, fitness centre, physiotherapy clinic, or golf club about routines that suit golfers.
- During golf season, stretch your muscles three times a week, about 20-30 minutes at a time.
- In the golf swing, everything is connected, reminds Dr. Erin Boynton of Toronto. Your shoulder could hurt, but the root problem is an imbalance with your hips and back. "You need exercises to rebalance and strengthen, and stretches to loosen up," says Dr. Boynton.
- To prevent some common injuries, see a professional – a golf pro. "It's all about the mechanics," says Dr. Jennifer Fletcher, an orthopaedic surgeon in Saint John, New Brunswick. Fixing a hitch in your swing can relieve stress in one area, and have a domino effect throughout your body.



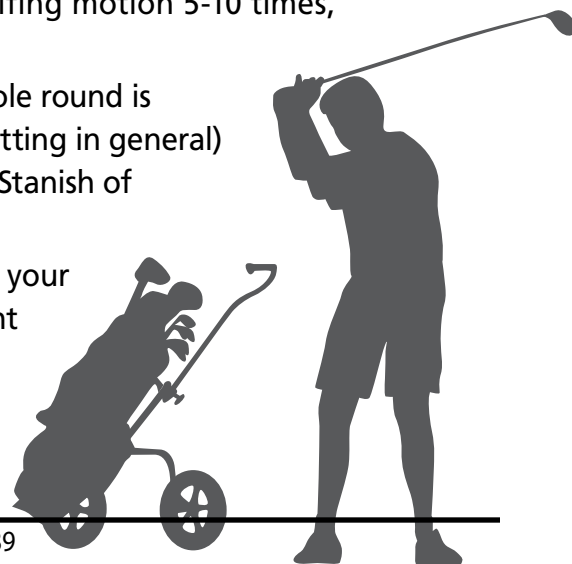
Getting the Most Out of Your Round

The best start to a round of golf? It's not a booming drive or a well-drained putt. Leave time for warm-ups, and thoughts on how you'll negotiate the course.

- Stretch and hit the range (from wedges to woods) for about 20 minutes to allow your soft tissues to get warm. "If you step to the first tee and try to hit Big Bertha 400 yards, you're more likely to tweak something," says Dr. Erin Boynton of Toronto. "You have to build up to it."
- If you're rushing from the car to the first tee, go through the golfing motion 5-10 times, without a club.

- The roughly five miles you'll walk in an average 18-hole round is good exercise, and keeps you loose. Riding in a cart (sitting in general) puts a big load on your lumbar spine, notes Dr. William Stanish of Halifax. The older you get, the less elastic you are.

- Carrying a golf bag, even with the best straps, can strain your upper back. "When I see people carrying a golf bag, I want to give them my card," says Jean-David Gagne, an athletic therapist in Quebec City who specializes in treating golfers. Make use of the pull-carts to save back strain.



Get Kids on the Right Course

Early interest in golf fosters lifelong activity

By: Stuart Foxman, Freelance Writer

Canadian children are playing hockey, basketball, football and golf in record numbers. The bad news – they're doing it on a video game, not outdoors.

"I want to inspire kids to play real golf, not Wii golf," says Conor O'Shea, a 27-year-old golf instructor and author of a book called *Marcus' Golfing Adventures*.

The book sends a message that youth can take up golf for the sake of fun, without putting pressure on themselves about their score. Getting kids into and enjoying golf early is important, says O'Shea, as it's an activity they can do for life.

That idea fits perfectly with the Foundation's *Because You Can!* public awareness and education campaign, which O'Shea is proud to support. O'Shea believes that anyone can play and love golf if they take the right approach. That means having fun, seeking opportunities to improve, and knowing that their effort is more important than the result. Success, says O'Shea, is more than numbers.

That's the lesson Marcus learns in the book, O'Shea's first. In it Marcus is a young boy who is trying to cope with the frustrations of the game. He learns to deal with the ups and downs, and take pleasure from the game itself, and not from his scorecard.

"We need positive messages like this to get kids moving," says Dr. Kevin Orrell, Chair of the Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation. "When children enjoy being active, they make it a habit."

O'Shea is planning further series of books that explore and promote a positive approach to sports. For now, his first book is already getting great response from within the golfing community.



From *Marcus' Golfing Adventures*, used by permission



"The Marcus Golfing Adventures message is a great roadmap for parents of junior golfers and kids in general," says Stephen Ames, the Canadian golf professional. "It delivers the right message about a lifelong game."

To order *Marcus' Golfing Adventures*, visit www.marcusgolfingadventures.com.

Are you newly referred for bone or joint surgery?

Still have questions? Ortho Connect is a free peer support program through which newly referred patients are matched with volunteers who have already undergone similar surgical treatment. Patients connect with trained volunteers by phone to learn a real-world patient view of what to expect from and how to prepare for their treatment. Ortho Connect helps patients to feel confident and informed about the orthopaedic treatment they will receive and how it will affect their everyday lives. Interested in the Ortho Connect program? Call 1-800-461-3639, or visit our website at www.canorth.org.



Looking for information about bone and joint health or surgery?

Visit the Foundation's website www.canorth.org for essential information about bone and joint health and prevention strategies, the most commonly performed surgeries, articles featuring actual patients, and much more. We're continually adding new information to help people build, keep and restore their bone and joint health, and to aid patients and their families through their treatment. Check in often!

About the Foundation

The Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation is Canada's only health charity dedicated solely to helping people build, maintain and restore their bone and joint health. By advancing research, delivering public and patient education and support, and promoting excellence of care, we strive to keep Canadians moving.

Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation
P.O. Box 7029, Innisfil, ON L9S 1A8
Tel: 1.800.461.3639 - 416.410.2341
Fax: 416.352.5078

Website: www.canorth.org
Email: mailbox@canorth.org

For information on our programs, press 1 to leave a message in our general mailbox. Messages are checked and returned several times daily. For receipts or to make a donation - press 6.

About OrthoLink

OrthoLink is published four times a year to share practical tips and information about the Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation's programs with people interested in building and keeping their bone and joint health. Copies are distributed to donors, volunteers and individuals who have requested information about bone and joint health or the Foundation.

If you have any comments, article ideas, or would like to receive a copy of this publication, contact the Foundation.



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