

Performance and Low Back Pain in Golfing with MBT

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MBT Model: Kisumu Sole 2005

ABSTRACT

MBT sandals have sporadically been used by subjects to play golf. Anecdotal comments indicated that MBT sandals improve the stability during the golf swing and reduce the low back pain which may develop during a golf game. This study was designed to test these two claims. Specifically, the objectives of this study were to assess the effect of the MBT sandal on

- (a) golf performance,
- (b) static and dynamic balance and
- (c) reduction of pain

in golfers with undiagnosed lower back pain.

The study was performed with 40 male golfers (20 for the control and 20 for the intervention group). They completed a six week repeated measures randomized controlled trial in which their golf performance, balance and low back pain, were assessed at baseline and at six weeks. Motion analysis of their swing, timed balance scores and visual analog scales (VAS) for pain were used to asses the effect of the unstable shoes for six weeks in practice and in daily activities on performance, balance and lower back pain. Results within group and between groups were compared through a group mean comparison test.

The results of this study can be summarized as follows:

- (1) There was no significant change in performance between the intervention and control group in any of the ten variables measuring golf performance.

- (2) There was no significant change between groups in the static or dynamic balance times.
- (3) There was a significant difference between groups in perceived low back pain scores for the in lab measurement on a VAS ($t = -2.02$, $P = 0.0515$) and a trend of a between group difference in the last recorded pain score immediately after playing golf ($t = -1.95$, $P = 0.0609$).

The results indicate that the MBT sandal can be used to reduce moderate lower back pain and improve balance without negatively affecting performance. It is speculated that a longer use of the MBT sandal for golf training and games will improve the general balance and ultimately the golf game, since increased balance is assumed to be important for golf performance.