

# Are Doan's Pills the Answer?

by Steve Potter

As golf course superintendents, one of our biggest risks is chronic back injury. Some years ago, pesticide exposure was our biggest health hazard, but if you follow all current safety guidelines, exposure to harmful chemicals now is minimal. No matter how careful you may be, however, you are constantly exposing your back to potential injury.

The most common problem is the extensive use of the utility vehicle to get around the golf course. There is no cart that I am aware of that gives adequate support to the lower back between the fourth and fifth vertebrae. This is the location of most back pain. It is also almost always where ruptured discs are trimmed or removed. Every time the cart takes a bounce or hits a rough spot, its suspension system absorbs as much shock as it can but the discs in your back absorb the rest.

Think about how much riding you do in a day's time and the thousands of small shocks that occur. Add to this the number of times you twist to get in and out of the vehicle. The possibility of injury is evident.

As with many of our prob-

lems, there is no solution but there are things you can do to help an existing problem or prevent more damage:

- If possible, make your first round of the day on foot. This saves at least 100 twisting procedures getting in and out of carts. An average 18-hole golf course can be walked, tee to green, in two hours.

- Get a sport seat such as those sold by Ricarro and mount it onto your vehicle right through the existing cushion. This will provide additional shock absorption and support.

- Get an air bag that fits behind the seat cushion and inflate it to provide support and cushion right at the fourth and fifth vertebrae.

- Contact a doctor and get a book to show you how to take care of your back and some simple exercises to do at home.

- Shed the excess pounds that add strain on your back.

- Finally, if all else fails, take some Doan's pills and wash them down with your favorite beverage.

*note: Brand names listed were for convenience only, not as an endorsement of the product.*

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Four said that it would not benefit the course.

My personal observation is that I see a lot more detail of the golf course as a player than I do riding on a utility vehicle or walking the golf course. I can tell how each green holds a shot. I can determine any difference in greens speed and I can also recognize any unfair or extremely difficult pin positions.

Because I enjoy the game I can also relate a little better to that member who only has weekends off and shows up at 6 a.m. to play only to be told by that "darn greenskeeper" that he can't go off until 9 a.m. because of the frost.

I also feel that the loudest voices heard around the clubhouse are the low handicap players. The better we relate to those voices the more recognition and consideration we get from them. This not only makes our job easier, I think it helps us do a better job.

**RESERVATIONS**  
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