

GETTING THE BEST FROM YOUR MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF EQUIPMENT

In Pain? Light Up



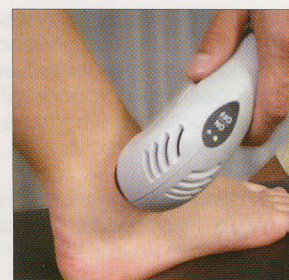
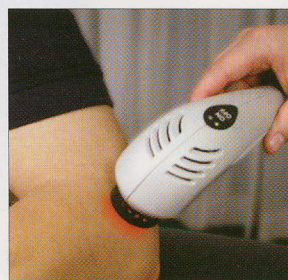
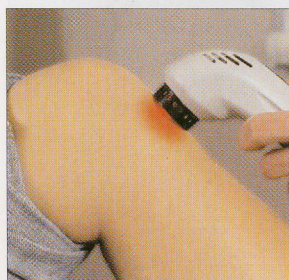
BRIGHT IDEAS: Do products such as LumiWave (top) and Solaris stimulate recovery?

AT VERY SPECIFIC WAVELENGTHS, LIGHT CAN SPEED THE HEALING PROCESS

BY NEIL WOLKODOFF

ALL IT TAKES is one mechanically unsound golf swing to cause muscle pain or injury. In golf, where pain management and healing are extremely important, light therapy has become popular as a drug-free alternative to reduce pain and speed healing.

Doctors and physical therapists recently have started using light therapy because it appears that light, in certain wavelengths, will reduce pain and speed tissue healing. The application of light is thought to initiate a series of enzymatic reactions and bioelectric events that stimulate the natural healing process at the cellular level. The light is actually converted to ATP (adeno-



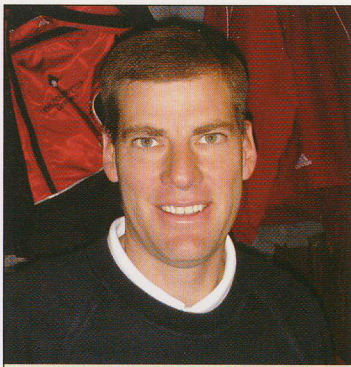
sine triphosphate), the energy compound readily available to cells.

Research has shown that light therapy improves inflammatory conditions such as tendonitis, speeding the healing process for wounds and tissue, and controlling the pain associated with inflammation. In addition, light of this nature enhances circulation, also important for both pain management and healing. The key is for the light to be of the right wavelength and applied for the proper period of time.

So where do you get a light-therapy

device that will help with those aches and pains from playing golf? Myriad low-cost home devices have hit the market, and have just as quickly been yanked because of non-compliance with Federal Drug Administration (FDA) rules; the FDA governs any device that emits light or energy.

Among the approved products on the low end of the cost scale is the LumiWave (biocaresystems.com), an infrared device with a transformer, control and four light-emitting pads. This device, which has FDA clearance for over-the-counter applications,



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uses light emitting diodes (LEDs) to deliver therapeutic energy through the skin to the deep tissue. It won't give you the same application level you'd get from a medical professional, yet it's a therapy you can apply yourself and even use when traveling. This device is designed to be applied twice per day, for three to six minutes per session, and retails for \$499.

On the other end of the scale is the Solaris (dynatronics.com/solaris), which provides electrical stimulation, ultrasound and laser light therapy modalities in one unit. This is a medical unit that requires a physician's prescription to acquire and use it for treatment, and knowledge of how to apply the different therapies. At more than \$4,000, it's no bargain, but it could be well worth it if you have significant need.

Recently, Vijay Singh purchased a Solaris multifunction laser unit, with the prescription of a physician, to help with pain relief and healing from his rigorous practice schedule. For those who have a real need for a unit of this level, it does have some unique features that have made it a popular choice with medical clinicians. For example, the XP option has an 8x10-inch pad that can treat the entire lower back in just 4-7 minutes. In one university research study, the Solaris unit with laser light therapy was demonstrated to greatly reduce the level of Delayed Onset of Muscle Soreness (DOMS), which can persist up to 48 hours after strenuous exercise.

So how do you know if light therapy is right for you? If your golf game and fitness schedule leave you with chronic pain, especially resulting from a reoccurring injury, then you are a candidate. There is just so much aspirin and ibuprofen you can take without risking liver damage, and opiate-based painkillers are potentially addictive. Like any other application, light therapy should not be a substitute for proper equipment, instruction, swing mechanics or a regular fitness program. Light therapy, if approved by the FDA for specific use by a manufacturer, shows great promise.

May the light be with you. **AG**

Contributing editor Neil Wolkodoff, Ph.D., trains professional and amateur golfers. Reach him at physicalgolf.com.