

## Back on his game now after spine specialized physical therapy at SC Spine Center

A back problem often comes on disguised as either pain or weakness in the legs. Similarly, as an active, retired professional, Craig didn't realize he had a spine problem until he started feeling unusually tired after walking even short distances.

"I love playing golf and taking walks with my wife, Beth, for exercise," Craig explains. "But it was getting to the point I couldn't keep up with Beth on our walks," he remembers.

In addition to decreased endurance, Craig was also taking shorter steps and leaning forward when he walked. He felt tightness in his thighs and a tired back after walking or standing for even short periods of time. Even though Craig continued to play golf, he tired more easily than in the past.

"When my wife finally said to me that I was walking like an old man, it prompted me to make an appointment with my doctor," he explains. Craig made an appointment with a spine specialist at South Carolina Spine Center. Diagnostics revealed Craig had cervical and lumbar spondylosis (also known as facet arthritis) and degenerative scoliosis.

Aging along with daily wear and tear can make discs thinner, this results in less space between the spinal vertebrae. Additional pressure is then placed on the facet joints and causes them to press together. Facet joint arthritis is slow to develop and the usual cause is degenerative spinal discs.

The spine specialist at South Carolina Spine Center talked with Craig about conservative treatment options including spine specialized physical therapy. Eager to return



*Though Craig was skeptical that physical therapy would help his condition, he could notice improvements in his gait after only a few sessions. "Many aspects of my daily life have improved since I attended physical therapy and I still incorporate a number of the stretches into my routine," Craig says.*

to a more active lifestyle, Craig decided to try physical therapy.

At his first appointment, his physical therapist, Katie Hews, PT, performed a gait analysis. Katie next explained that his spine condition was causing the change in his gait. She also went over the individualized physical therapy regimen they would follow to help provide the most symptom relief for Craig. The exercises and stretches would focus on strengthening and activating his glute muscles and relieving tightness in his thighs.

"I was skeptical about physical therapy and wasn't sure it would help," Craig remembers. But he was pleasantly surprised to

notice a difference in his gait after only a few sessions.

His wife noticed improvements also. "Around the time Craig started physical therapy, I had a two week trip planned. When I left for my trip, Craig couldn't stand up straight and was leaning forward as he walked. By the time I arrived home, Craig had gone to four PT sessions and I noticed an immediate difference in his stride," Beth remembers.

Craig continued to attend physical therapy over a period of two months. Today, he is walking with longer strides and is able to stand up straight again. He and his wife are walking together again for exercise. Craig is happy to note he is not as tired now after playing 18 holes. "Before physical therapy, I would occasionally play golf when it was cart path only, but was very reluctant to do so. Now, that's not the case," Craig says. "Many aspects of my daily life have improved since I attended physical therapy and I still incorporate a number of the stretches into my routine," Craig adds.

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