GⓄT AN INJURY?

Complete rest might not be the best cure

PHOTO: Corbis

> **Aches could well have originated from the scoliosis you did not know about, or other out-of-whack parts in your body system.**
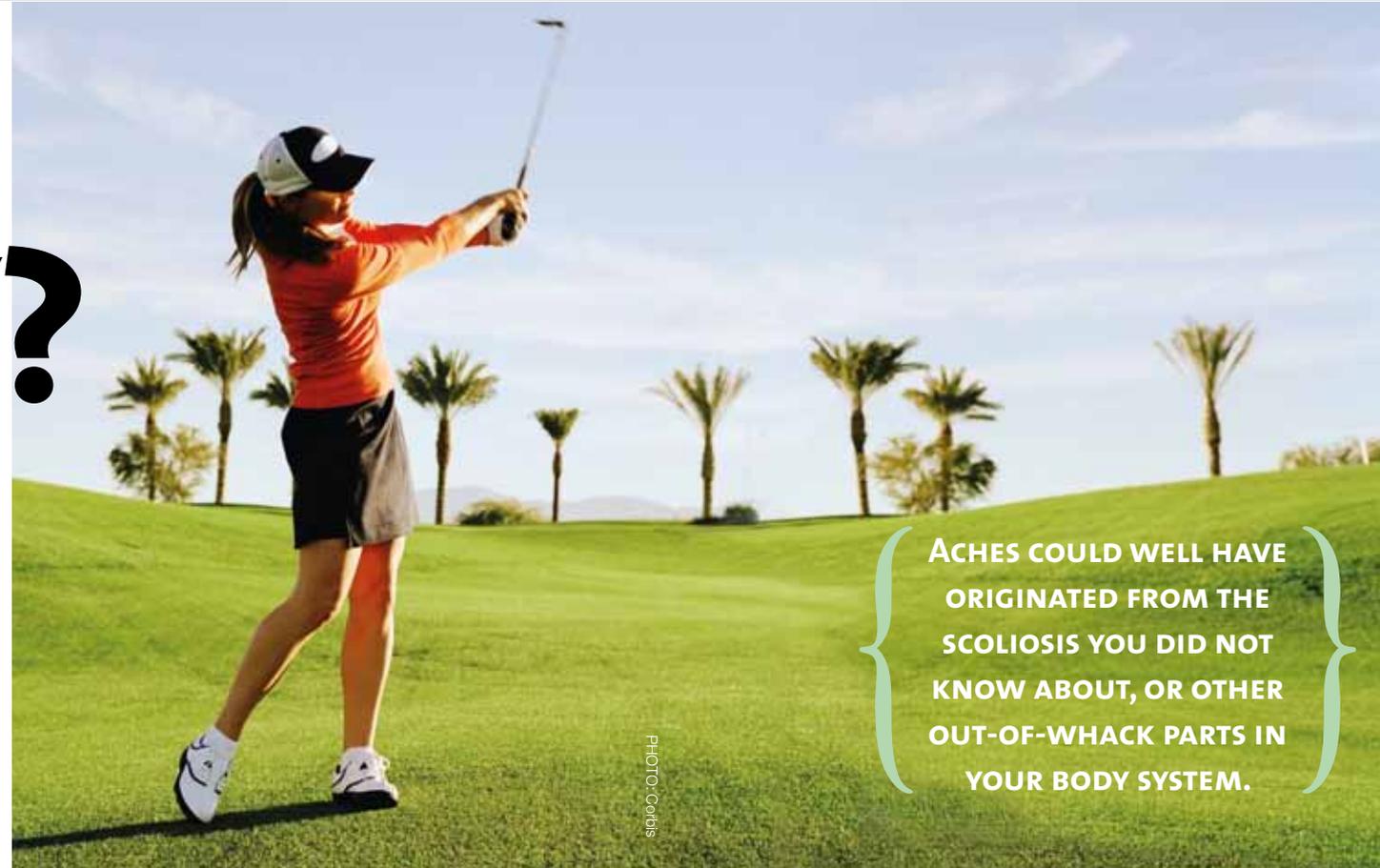
Stepped into a pothole and wrenched your ankle? Returned a tennis ball with the "wrong" stroke? Hit the ground, hard, before contacting the golf ball? The likely consequences are immediate sharp pain, followed shortly by swelling of the injured part, and an ache that could last any time from two days to several months, such as in the case of a "tennis elbow".

The usual treatment for injuries such as a sprain, strain or muscle pull calls for immediate first aid treatment to prevent future complications and to help shorten the healing process. Easy-to-administer self-help steps are spelt out in the acronym RICE – Rest, Ice, Compression and Elevation. Doctors can also help alleviate symptoms like pain and inflammation by prescribing pills.

MANUAL MEDICINE

Increasingly, manual medicine is being offered as a treatment for aches and ailments.

Manual medicine is a natural, non-invasive and scientifically-proven method for the assessment, diagnosis, treatment and management of bones, joints, muscles, nerves and organs that are dysfunctional or cause pain. It is based on three basic concepts:

1 THE BODY HAS THE ABILITY TO HEAL
After it is injured, the body is able to respond naturally to repair, remodel and recover itself. Manual medicine enhances this natural process by putting the body on the path of optimum healing.

2 THE BODY IS A UNIT
The body functions as a unit to allow for external and internal shock absorption and/or production. The body unit consists of four main systems which work in synergy. Should any part be in disharmony, other parts of the body will feel the negative effects.

The four systems are:

• **Active system** This consists of muscles, tendons and fasciae. These are structures that a person can activate and cause a movement to occur.

• **Passive system** This consists of bones, joints, ligaments, capsules and discs. These structures cannot be activated unless they are moved by the active system.

• **Visceral system** This consists of the cardiovascular, reproductive, urinary and digestive organs. All organs are mechanically linked to the other systems. It also releases hormones for communication within the body.

• **Neural system** This consists of the brain, spinal cord and nerve roots. It provides the "electrical network" to control all the systems to function as one, thus achieving body "balance".

3 THE BODY NEEDS MOVEMENT
The body is a locomotive machine. Movement is essential for tissue health and repair.

WHAT MANUAL MEDICINE DOES

Manual medicine offers a combination of manual therapy and exercise-based therapy. Manual therapy involves a hands-on approach to first discover the source and cause of the symptoms. Having identified the root cause, steps are then

taken to address it. All four systems in the body unit can be manually manipulated to promote healing.

Exercise-based therapy will complement the healing process as it guides the body through its normal range of everyday movements. This form of therapy has proven to be a sustainable method for self-recovery.

So the next time you feel a pain in your finger joints, don't dismiss it as a result of too much typing on your computer keyboard – especially if it is a recurring pain. Or you have a tennis elbow that won't heal, don't just pop a pill to kill the pain. These aches could well have originated from the scoliosis you did not know about, or other out-of-whack parts in your body system. Get to the root of the problem and sort it out at source.