

Golfer's back to best form

by **Guy Martin**

A GOLFER from Leatherhead advised to give up the sport because of chronic back problems has defied doctors by recovering and improving his handicap.

Ken Higbert was told his spine was so twisted he would never stand up straight again and would need a 12-hour operation to fuse it solid.

The 47-year-old noticed something was wrong last year and despite seeing chiropractors and osteopaths, the pain kept growing worse.

"It was soul-destroying," he said. "Golf is my life. When the back pain started I could still play but it was really hard and I would suffer for days

afterwards. As the condition progressed the pain increased and it was impossible to play.

"I was so frustrated, I had no idea what to do. The only advice any doctor could give me was to have my spine fused solid. Major invasive surgery was not something I wanted to face - at my age the risks are much higher and no doctor could guarantee I would be able to play golf again. The surgeon told me to knock golf on the head. He said it was probably doing harm to my back. I was devastated."

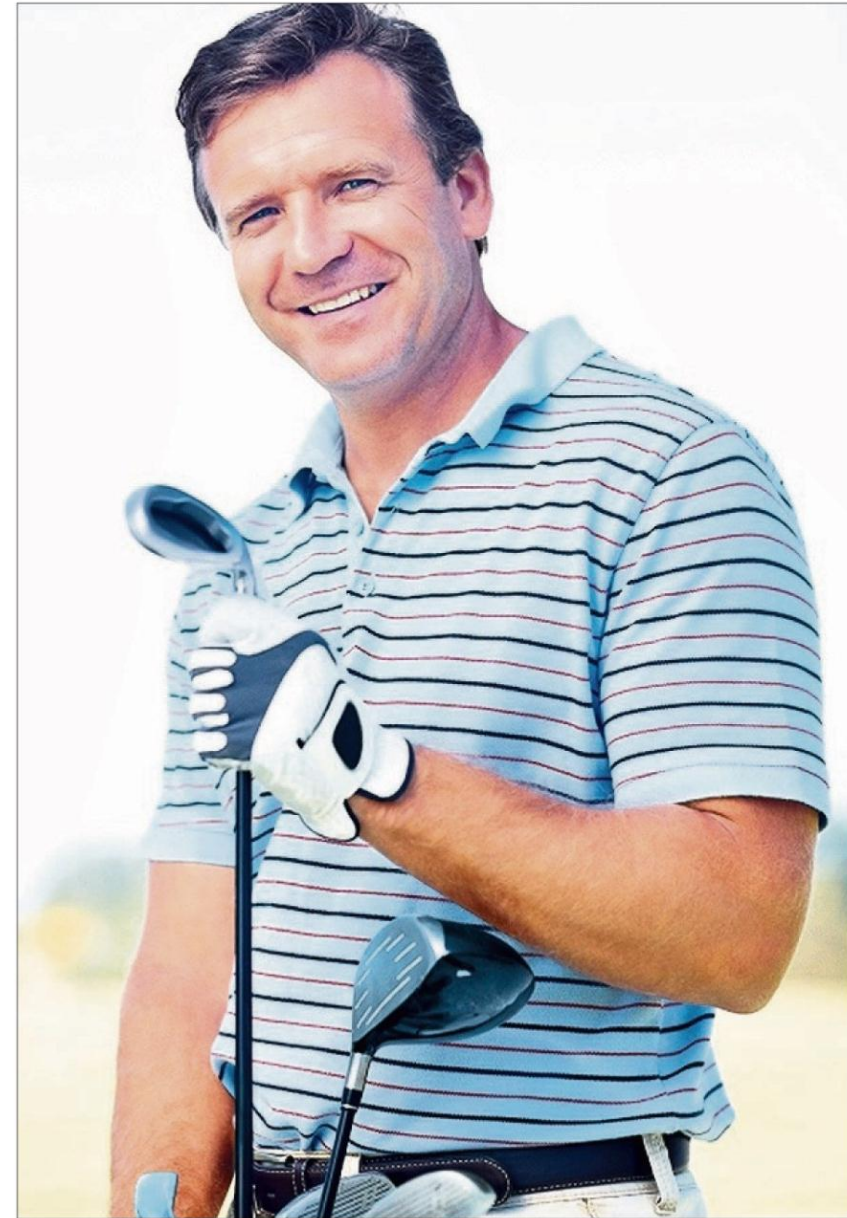
But Ken, told he was suffering scoliosis, which causes the spine to curve sideways, was not prepared to give up and found an exercise routine which changed his prognosis.

Going through clinic

Scoliosis SOS, he found non-surgical treatments reduced pain and improved breathing.

As the improvement continued, he was back on the greens and is determined to raise awareness of scoliosis and alternatives to surgery.

"Since completing the treatment I have been able to return to playing and my handicap has decreased," he said. "I think it's because I have been able to focus on playing rather than the pain. I feel like a new person. My wife has said I seem like a new person and I am able to join in with the family without feeling like an 80-year-old. I feel I have been reborn and I am definitely going to live every day to the full. People take their health for granted but I definitely won't be."



Ken Higbert from Leatherhead, whose problems with scoliosis meant he faced giving up his beloved golf.