

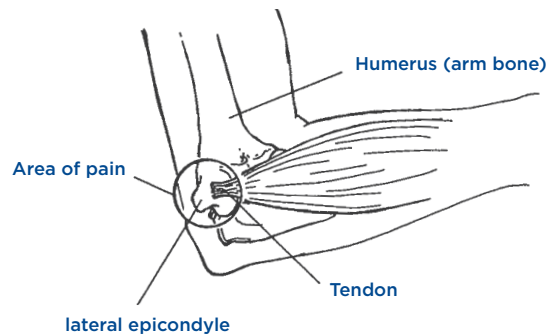


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Tennis Elbow Handout

WHAT IS IT?

Tennis elbow, also known as lateral epicondylitis, is one of the most common painful conditions of the elbow. Inflammation and pain occur on and around the outer bony bump of the elbow where the muscles and tendons attach to the bone. These structures are responsible for lifting your wrist up so this condition can occur with many activities, not just tennis.



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Most commonly you will have pain & tenderness on the outer side of the elbow and this pain may even travel down the forearm. Often there is pain and/or weakness with gripping and lifting activities. You may also experience difficulty with twisting activities during sports or even opening the lid of a jar.

WHY DOES IT HURT?

It hurts because you are putting tension on a place where the tissue is weakened, which is usually due to a degenerative process that seems to take a long time for your body to recognize and heal.

WHY DO I HAVE IT?

This is a common problem and unfortunately we don't know why some people get this condition and others do not. Surprisingly, it is not at all clear that it comes from overuse or something that you did "wrong". There is no doubt that if you do have tennis elbow, it will bother you more to do certain things, but that does not necessarily mean it was caused by those activities.

WILL I NEED SURGERY?

Tennis elbow rarely requires surgery. Patients that do not recover from the basic program above may need to have formal physical therapy or even a cortisone injection. Surgery is only considered if symptoms have been present for more than 6 months and has not responded to traditional treatments.

WHAT DO I DO TO GET BETTER?

The first step to getting better is getting rid of the inflammation. Daily ice massage will help—fill a paper cup with water and freeze. Peel the top of the cup away to expose the ice and rub over the affected area in a circular motion for 5–7 minutes. Your physician may also prescribe some anti-inflammatory medication to take for several weeks.

Modification of the activity that caused the problem and rest will help. Wearing a tennis elbow strap may also help take the pressure off of the tendons where they attach to the bone. This can be worn during any type of wrist/elbow activity.

Stretching and strengthening the muscles and tendons involved are key to making this problem go away. The home program below of daily stretches is a good place to start. Once your elbow starts feeling better you will be able to add some light strengthening exercises.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SOME DAILY STRETCHES TO START WITH AT HOME:

STRETCHING EXERCISES

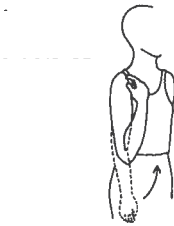
1. WRIST RANGE OF MOTION: Bend your wrist forward and backward as far as you can. Do 3 sets of 10



2. PRONATION AND SUPINATION OF THE FOREARM: With our elbow bent 90°, turn your palm upward and hold for 5 seconds. Slowly turn your palm downward and hold for 5 seconds. Make sure you keep your elbow at your side and bent 90° throughout this exercise. Do 3 sets of 10.



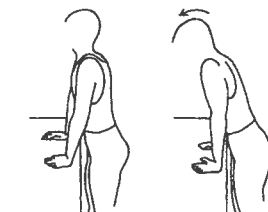
3. ELBOW RANGE OF MOTION: Gently bring your palm up toward your shoulder and bend elbow as far as you can. Then straighten your elbow as far as you can 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.



4. WRIST FLEXION STRETCH: Stand at a table with your palms down, fingers flat, and elbows straight. Lean your body weight forward. Hold this position for 15 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



5. WRIST EXTENSION STRETCH: Stand with the back of your hands on a table, palms facing up, fingers pointing toward your body, and elbows straight. Lean away from the table. Hold this position for 15 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times.



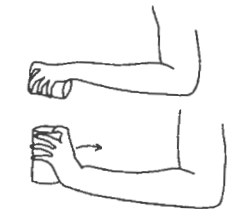
STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

1. WRIST FLEXION EXERCISE:

Hold a can or hammer handle in your hand with your palm facing up. Bend your wrist upward. Slowly lower the weight and return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually increase the weight of the can or weight you are holding.



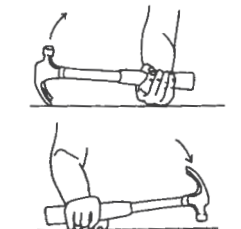
2. WRIST EXTENSION EXERCISE: Hold a soup can or hammer handle in your hand with your palm facing down. Slowly bend your wrist upward. Slowly lower the weight down into the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually increase the weight of the can or weight you are holding.



3. WRIST RADIAL DEVIATION STRENGTHENING: Put your wrist in the sideways position with your thumb up. Hold a can of soup or hammer handle and gently bend your wrist up, with the thumb reaching toward the ceiling. Slowly lower to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10.



4. FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION STRENGTHENING: Hold a soup can or hammer handle in your hand and bend your elbow 90°. Slowly rotate your hand with your palm upward and then palm down. Do 3 sets of 10.



5. WRIST EXTENSION (WITH BROOM HANDLE): Stand up and hold a broom handle in both hands. With your arms at shoulder level, elbows straight and palms down, roll the broom handle backward in your hand as if you are reeling something in using a broom handle. Do 3 sets of 10.

