

OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS

- Stop the activity responsible until you have sought medical advice.
- Ice the elbow for five minutes every 15 minutes if possible.
- Physical therapy can help in the first instance.
- Take anti-inflammatories for one week (provided you have no allergies or gastric irritation).
- Do regular stretching exercises like the ones in this leaflet. It may be useful obtaining a wrist/forearm splint to help rest the inflamed tendon.
- Injections should be considered if the exercises have not helped. You are more likely to obtain a longer lasting result from an injection.
- Surgery can be carried out under local injection (subcutaneous tenotomy) with a 95% success rate and no reduction in grip strength.

FIND A PRACTITIONER

- Association of Chartered Physiotherapists in Sports Medicine <http://spxj.nl/1Mnt9hD>
- General Osteopathic Council <http://spxj.nl/1MCDbal>
- British Chiropractic Association <http://spxj.nl/1SvCOZd>
- The Sports Massage Association <http://spxj.nl/1MMcPOV>
- British Association of Sports Rehabilitators and Trainers <http://spxj.nl/1MfYpMe>
- Society of Sports Therapists <http://spxj.nl/1NgPs4W>

CONTACT DETAILS

OTHER INFORMATION

WHO IS SPORTEX CO-kinetic

We specialise in producing information for medical, health and exercise professionals on the subject of exercise, health and musculoskeletal injury. This includes subscription publications for practitioners and advice handouts for the public. All our material is written and reviewed by leading medical professionals. For more information visit www.co-kinetic.com or telephone +44 (0)845 652 1906.

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Advice for 'tennis' elbow injury

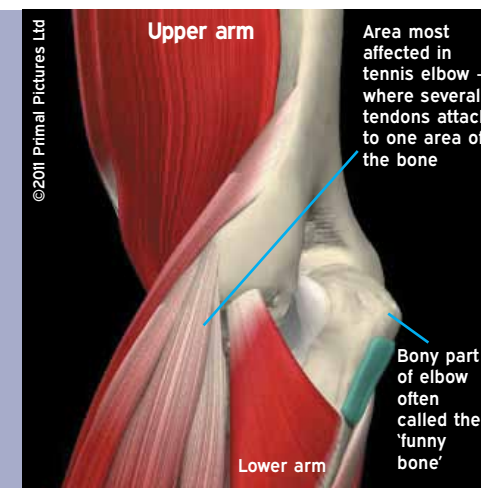


YOUR INJURY

Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) is an inflammation of the outer elbow where the tendon attaches to the bone. It is caused by the repetitive movements and the gripping actions common in tennis hence the term 'tennis' elbow. However it may also occur in other activities requiring repetitive gripping actions. Unfortunately rest as a treatment is rarely helpful.

PREVENTION

Try the following modifications to the equipment causing your 'tennis' elbow: a lighter racket, increase grip size, use string vibration dampers, reduce string tension, increase racket head size, play with newer balls, more flexible racket shaft, don't play with



Side view of the outside of the elbow showing the muscles and tendons responsible for 'tennis elbow'

wet balls and use softer grip material. These changes refer to tennis rackets but some changes are relevant to tools/work equipment also.

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YOUR REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

This programme has specific exercises to help stretch and strengthen muscles which may be weak. It is really important to ensure the exercises are performed with good technique and good postural control. Make sure you are pain-free at all times and take care not to progress too quickly. We have given suggested sets and repetitions, but everyone is different so your practitioner may give guidance that is more specific to you.

MAKE SURE TO WARM UP AND COOL DOWN

If muscles are tight, weak or injured, it is particularly important to warm up (unless advised otherwise by your practitioner) with a fast walk or a gentle jog at a pain-free pace for 5 minutes before you start your exercises. This increases your circulation and helps prepare the muscles for the activity to come. When you have finished your exercises, end the session with a 5 minute gentle walk or slow jog to allow your heart rate to slow down gradually.

STRETCHING AND STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

continued overleaf

WRIST EXTENSION STRETCH



Hold the affected wrist as shown with your palm facing you and apply pressure with your other hand to push your fingers closer to you, until you feel a stretch on the top of your arm and the outside of your elbow. Reduce the stretch if it's painful. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	10

FINGER CURL



Hold your hand up with your fingers splayed out then slowly clench and unclench your fist returning to the starting position. Don't clench too hard, just work your fingers so they contract and relax.

SETS	REPS
2	15-20

WRIST FLEXOR STRETCH



Hold the affected wrist as shown with your fingers pointing down and your palm facing away from you. Apply pressure with your other hand to bend the wrist gently backwards until you feel a stretch in your arm and the inside of your elbow. Hold the stretch for 10 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	10

GRIP STRENGTHENING



Squeeze a squash ball (or therapeutic putty) in the palm of your hand. Keep the hand in alignment with the forearm so the wrist is not bent. If it's painful then find a larger object like some crumpled up paper towels or newspaper. It should be pain free. Hold each squeeze for 3 seconds.

SETS	REPS
2	20

WRIST SUPINATOR STRETCH



Hold your wrist out with your palm facing down. Take hold of the outside of your outstretched wrist with your other hand and gently turn it inwards so your palm faces away from you. Do not overstretch it and ensure you are pain free. Hold the stretch for 5 seconds.

SETS	REPS
1	8

TOWEL WRINGING



Hold a rolled up towel in both hands and wring the towel out by rotating it with the affected arm. If this is painful try a bigger towel so your grip is larger. Again this exercise must be pain free.

SETS	REPS
2	20

HAND STRENGTHENING



With your hand raised and fingers outstretched, touch your thumb to your little finger and then return to the starting position. Then touch your ring finger and so on, so you work backwards and forwards through your fingers. Repeat this 20 times.

SETS	REPS
2	20

WRIST FLEXION AND EXTENSION WITH A WEIGHT



In a seated position, with your forearm supported and holding a small hand weight in your palm, flex and extend your wrist for 3 seconds in each direction. If this is too easy, use a heavier weight and if it's too hard, use a lighter weight. The exercise should be pain free.

SETS	REPS
2	20