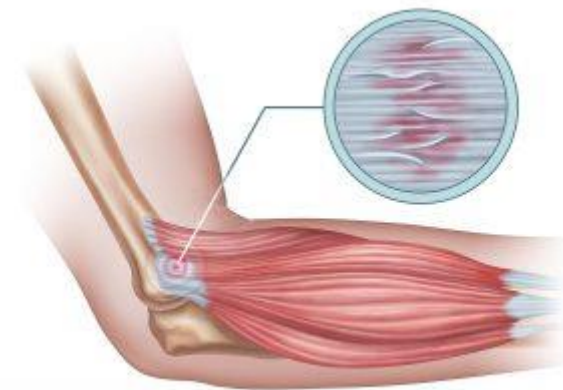

SELF-CARE INFORMATION ON TENNIS ELBOW (LATERAL EPICONDYLITIS)

What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow is also known as lateral epicondylitis or lateral elbow pain. It is a condition that results in pain around the outside of the elbow. This is often because of overuse of the muscles and tendons in the forearm. It may be due to certain sports or everyday activities especially if you do a lot of heavy or repetitive arm activities. Men and women are equally affected, and it is most common between the ages of 40-50. It may come on gradually or suddenly.



What are the symptoms?

Common symptoms include:

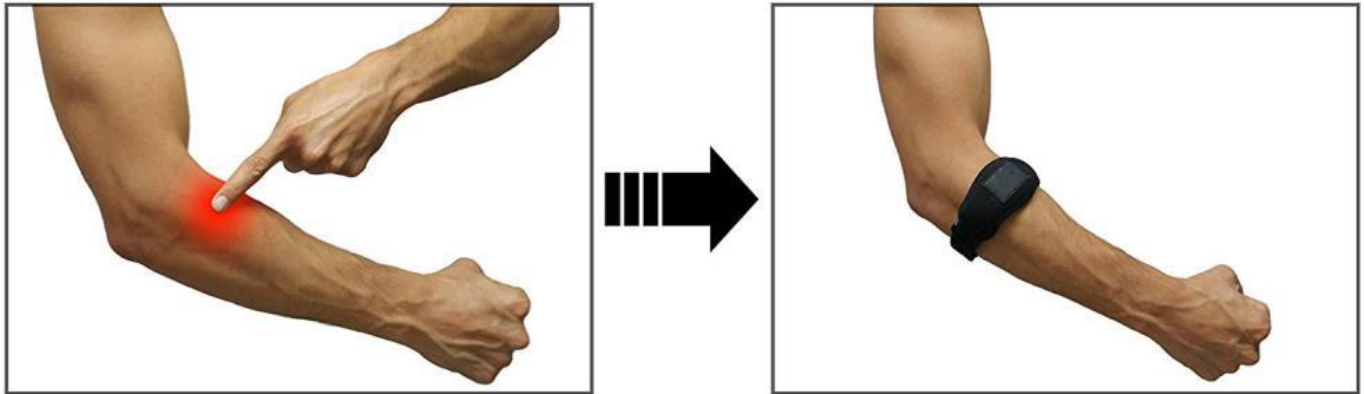
- Pain and tenderness on the outside of your elbow.
- Pain can also track down your forearm.
- Pain on repeated wrist movements, gripping activities or rotation of the arm.
- Difficulty in fully straightening your arm.

How long will it last?

In most cases, tennis elbow will gradually improve. This is a process that can vary in time from weeks to several months in some cases.

What can I do to help myself?

- **Activity** - Continue your normal daily activities but do try to modify any activities that aggravate your symptoms such as heavy lifting. Try and take regular breaks from activity, especially repetitive or sustained activities such as computer work.
- **Medication** – You may be prescribed simple pain relief or anti-inflammatory medication, take this at regular intervals until the pain settles. An alternative is to use a topical anti-inflammatory gel. Your GP can advise you on this.
- **Brace** – In some cases a tennis elbow brace or clasp may help. Try the brace in different positions near your elbow, until it gives you the most relief from the activities that aggravate it. Intermittently readjust the brace as it can move position during activity. Your Physiotherapist or GP will be able to advise you if needed.

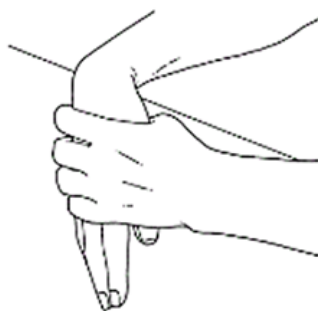


- **Ice** – Try applying cold to the area for 12-15 minutes several times a day. Wrap ice in a damp tea towel before using to prevent burns to the skin.
- **Strengthening exercise:** see below.

Eccentric exercises

Try these exercises twice a day. You will notice less pain over several weeks. You must exercise regularly to stop your pain from returning.

If your symptoms worsen on doing the exercises, then stop and ask the advice of your GP or Physiotherapist.



1. Wrist extensor stretch

Straighten your arm fully.

Relax your wrist so that you leave your hand hanging.

With your other hand, gently push against the back of your hand so it bends towards you. Feel a stretch along the top of your arm.

Relax.



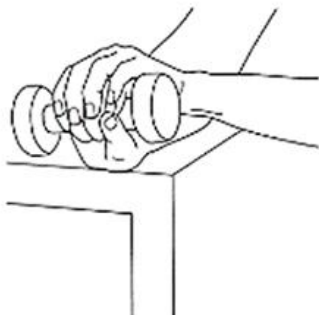
2. Wrist flexor stretch

Straighten your arm fully.

Relax your wrist.

Use your other hand to gently pull your fingers towards you.

Feel a stretch in your wrist muscles.



3. Extensor strengthening

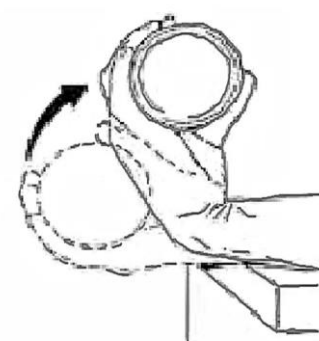
Rest your forearm on a table.

Hang your wrist and hand off the edge.

Hold a light hand weight or a can of beans.

Moving only your wrist, raise the weight. Hold for 10 seconds then slowly lower it.

Repeat this x10.



4. Wrist Curls

Hold a light hand weight or can of beans.

Rest your forearm on a table, palm facing up.

Hang your wrist and hand off the edge.

Moving only your wrist, gently raise the weight.

Hold here for 5 seconds.

Gently lower the weight.

Repeat x10.



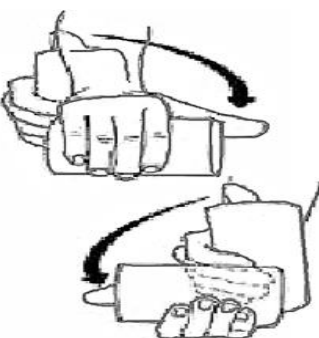
5. Handshake Stretch

Holding the weight or can with your thumb

pointing up. (Imagine you are going to shake hands with someone.)

Move the can or weight up and down slowly.

Keep your arm still by resting it on the table and only move your wrist.



6. Wrist Rotations

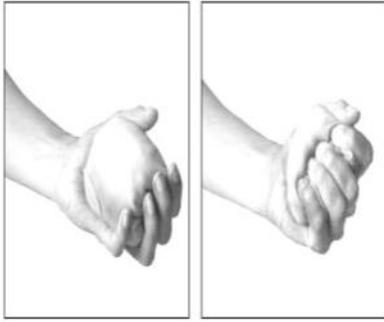
Hold the weight or can in your hand with your thumb pointing up.

Turn the wrist inward as far as possible. Hold for 2 seconds.

Then turn the wrist outward as far as possible.

Hold for 2 seconds.

Repeat as many times as you can.



7. Sock squeeze

Hold a rolled-up sock / tennis ball.
Make a fist around it and squeeze.
Hold the squeeze for 5 seconds.
Relax.
Repeat x10.



8. Bicep Curls

Hold a light weight or can of beans.
Secure your injured elbow with your other hand
or by sitting in a chair and resting it on your thigh.
Slowly curl the weight up towards your chest
and down again.
Repeat this x10.

You can also find instructional videos on you tube by searching for eccentric exercises for tennis elbow.
Click link for this example VIDEO: <https://youtu.be/TRHxr7jTFdw>

Other treatments that may be offered

- In some cases, a steroid injection can be given to help ease the pain. This is usually a short-term benefit and there are risks associated with it. Your GP or physiotherapist can advise you on this.
- You may be referred to a Physiotherapist. They may use acupuncture, taping or alternative exercises that are suitable for your individual case.
- In cases of severe pain which does not improve you may be referred to an Orthopaedic Surgeon for a surgical opinion. However, this is rarely necessary.

Useful contacts

- Ask your pharmacist
- Patient UK - www.patient.co.uk
- NHS Choices, www.nhs.uk/conditions/

If you have further questions:

Call the **practice** on *01285 653184 or 01285 653122*
If you require **urgent** medical advice, call *111 (24 Hrs)*
In an **emergency** call **999**