

## Patient Information Leaflet

# What is Golfers Elbow?

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## What is golfers elbow?

Golfers elbow is characterised by pain and tenderness on the inside of the elbow. This painful area on your elbow is at a point called your medial epicondyle, and so it is also known as Medial Epicondylitis. It is similar to tennis elbow but the difference between the two is the location of the pain.



Golfers elbow occurs as a result of overuse to a group of tendons that bend your wrist and fingers. The tendon itself changes in its' structure and is no longer able to withstand the forces that everyday life puts upon it, and this is why you have pain.

## What are the signs and symptoms of golfers elbow?

- **Pain:** Golfers elbow leads to pain and tenderness located on the inside of the elbow. This pain can be made worse by bending the elbow or gripping objects. Pain can be an ache over the elbow and/or a shooting pain towards the hand.
- **Stiffness:** Your elbow may become stiff and your movement may be reduced.
- **Weakness:** You may experience weakness in your wrist or reduced grip strength.

## **What can cause golfers elbow?**

Golfers elbow affects men and women equally. It mainly affects people between the ages of 30 to 50 years old. Golfers elbow is caused predominately by activities that require repetitive or excessive bending of the wrist. An incorrect golf swing is a common cause, but many other sports or work related activities can cause the problem .i.e. DIY, use of hand tools, typing or gardening. Golfers elbow can also result from a single violent trauma i.e. a direct injury from a fall or sudden blow to the elbow.

## **What are the treatment options for golfers elbow?**

**Lifestyle Modification:** You should try to modify movements and activities that worsen your symptoms as much as possible. Resting from activities that bring on pain can help to reduce pain levels and promote the healing process. If you are a golfer you may need to check that your golf clubs are sized correctly with the appropriate grip. You should also check that your swing technique is correct; you may need to ask for an assessment from a golf instructor.

**Anti inflammatories:** Anti-inflammatory medications are often used to control pain and inflammation.

**Cortisone injections:** If other methods fail, a steroid (cortisone) injection may relieve symptoms.

## **Physiotherapy**

Physiotherapy has been shown to be helpful in the treatment of golfers elbow. The idea of completing exercises is to recondition the muscles/tendons that have been affected.

## Stretches

Fully straighten your affected elbow with your hand facing upwards. Using your other hand, pull your hand down as far as you comfortably can. You should feel a stretch on the inside of your elbow and forearm; this should not be painful.



How many should I do?

Hold this gentle stretch for 30 seconds, and try to do this 'little and often' throughout the day. Video available on Youtube; Search for PLYMOUTHNHSPHYSIO/wrist flexor stretch or follow this link

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E\\_Gbfvm2g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5E_Gbfvm2g)

## Eccentric Strengthening

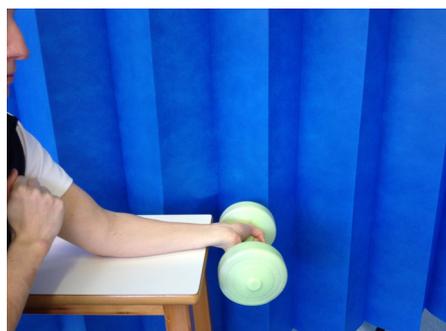
Hold a small weight, a tin of baked beans or a bottle of water would be suitable. Rest your affected arm over a table top with your hand facing upwards and your wrist hanging off the end.



With your unaffected hand lift your affected hand so your wrist is as far up as it will go.



Let go of your affected hand and **SLOWLY**, with control, lower your wrist so it is hanging over the side of the table once more.



How many should I do?

Three lots of 10 repetitions twice a day is recommended.

Follow link below for video of this exercise on youtube. If the link doesn't work please search you tube for PLYMOUTH NHS PHYSIO/ eccentric loading forearm flexors.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVwKOvN-Uag>

NB. The exercises should be mildly uncomfortable. If they are too painful please seek advice from your physiotherapist.

**Your notes:**



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