

What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow is a condition that commonly results in pain around the outside of your elbow joint. This painful area is at a point called your lateral epicondyle (the place at which a group of tendons from your forearm come together and attach to the bone) and so is also known as lateral epicondylitis.



Tennis elbow occurs when there is damage to the tendons that straighten your wrist. The tendon itself changes in its' structure and is no longer able to withstand the forces that every day life puts upon it. The latest research has shown that the condition is caused not by inflammation but, in fact, by a lack of it.

What are the signs and symptoms of Tennis Elbow?

- **Pain.** Tennis elbow leads to pain on the outside of your elbow. This pain can increase with gripping or rotation of the wrist and forearm e.g. opening a jar or a door. You may experience constant pain which could occur at rest and can affect your sleep. The pain can travel down your arm from your elbow towards your wrist.
- **Weakness.** Weakness in your wrist or reduction in your grip strength
- **Stiffness.** Tennis elbow can cause stiffness and a general restriction of your movement
- **Tingling.** Sometimes tingling and numbness can also be experienced.

What can cause Tennis Elbow?

About 5 in 1,000 adults develop tennis elbow each year. It mainly affects people between the ages of 35 and 55. Women and men are affected equally. Tennis elbow is caused by activities that require repetitive or excessive straightening of the wrist. This can include

Over use activities at home

- Gardening e.g. using shears
- Racquet sports such as tennis or squash
- DIY

Over use activities at work

- Computer work and typing
- Administrative work e.g. filing
- Manual work e.g. labouring, plumbing, plastering or factory work.

Trauma

- Tennis elbow can also occur as the result of a single, forceful injury.

What are the treatment options for tennis elbow?

Modifying your activities

You should try to modify movements and activities that bring on your symptoms as much as possible. Resting from activities that bring on pain can help to reduce pain levels and promote the healing process. Ensuring your work station is set up properly at work can help too. If you play racquet sports then reviewing your technique and possibly your handle can also be helpful. In some people, simply modifying their activities and reducing repetitive activities can be enough to improve tennis elbow.

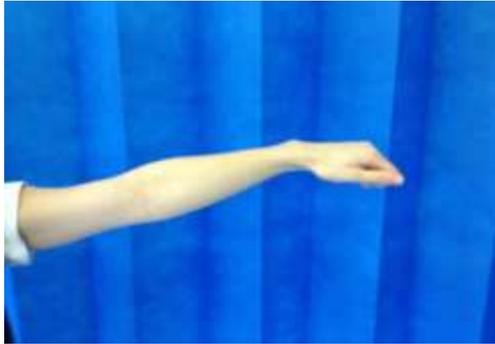
Physiotherapy

Physiotherapy has been shown to be helpful in the treatment of tennis elbow. Studies have shown that physiotherapy may not be any better than a steroid injection at relieving pain in the short-term (within the first six weeks). But, it may be superior to steroid injections in the long-term. Physiotherapy treatment may include many things but here are a few simple exercises you can try which have been proven to improve tennis elbow.



Stretches

Fully straighten your affected arm. Using your other hand, bend your wrist down as far as you can comfortably. You should feel a stretch in your elbow and forearm. This should not be too painful.



How many should I do?

Each stretch should be held for 30 seconds. It is best to do this 'little and often' throughout the day.

Video available on youtube, search for PLYMOUTHNHSPHYSIO/forearm extensor stretch or follow link below.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTWTPPBk37g>

Eccentric Strengthening

Hold a small weight (a tin of baked beans or even a bottle of water would be suitable).

Rest your affected arm over a table top so your wrist is able to hang off the end.



With your unaffected side lift your affected hand so your wrist is as far back 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.

There is also a video available on you tube. Follow the link below or Search youtube for PLYMOUTHNHSPHYSIO/eccentric loading wrist flexors.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKhYIUz9pA>

NB Remember these exercises may be slightly uncomfortable. But if they are too painful please seek advice of your physiotherapist or GP. Also the exact weight or resistance used should be advised by your physio.

**This leaflet is available in larger print and other formats
please contact physiotherapy department on the address
below.**

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**Physiotherapy Department, Derriford Hospital, Derriford Rd,
Plymouth PL6 8DH
0845 1558208**

Author A. Millward

