

Tennis Elbow



Exploring the what, why and how with STRIVE Sport & Exercise Medicine



What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) is the most common injury that occurs at the elbow. It is caused by overloading the muscles and tendons that attach to the lateral aspect of your elbow (the lateral epicondyle). Over time, this can lead to micro tears in the tendons which can result in pain. Many people with tennis elbow will experience pain that starts over the lateral epicondyle and can travel down towards the wrist. This pain can worsen with extending the wrist or twisting the forearm as the muscles responsible for these movements attach to the lateral epicondyle.



Why did I get this?

Our body is great at adapting to the demands that we ask of it. If, however, we do not give our body time to adapt and recover then we can place ourselves at a greater risk of injury. Tennis elbow can develop from repetitive tasks that involve repeated extending of the wrist and twisting of the forearm. Work-related tasks include handling tools or lifting heavy objects multiple times per day. This injury can also be seen in sports such as tennis or golf as your forearm muscles work hard to control the wrist through ball contact.



How can I get better?

Your recovery begins with activity modification and a targeted exercise program. Initially you may have to reduce or take a short break from the activities that cause you pain. As your pain improves, you can begin to gradually re-introduce these activities. Exercises will work to strengthen the muscles of your forearm, improve mobility of your wrist and elbow, and help facilitate healing of your tendon. Tendons take time to heal, so it is important to stay consistent with your exercises. If your tennis elbow persists then you can speak to your health care provider about next steps including manual therapy, bracing and other therapeutic options.

4 Exercises for you

Exercise: Eccentric Wrist Extension
Goal: Strength

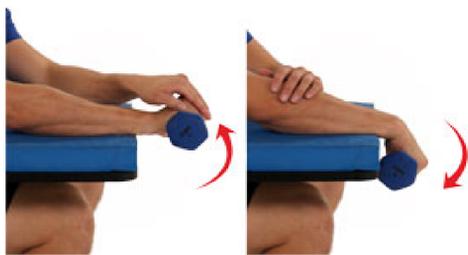


Photo: All rights reserved. Physiotec

1. Hold a weight in your hand and rest your forearm on a table so your wrist is placed over the edge of the table with the palm facing down. Keep your elbow straight.
2. Using the opposite hand, lift or extend the weighted hand as high as possible while keeping your forearm on the table.
3. Slowly lower the weight completely (3-5 seconds) and repeat.

Parameters: 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Perform once per day, every other day.

Exercise: Hammer Rotations
Goal: Strength



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1. Hold a hammer or a small weight.
2. Start with your palm in a neutral position (palm facing sideways, thumb up) with the hammer vertical.
3. Slowly turn your palm down (3-5 seconds), resisting against the weight of the hammer.
4. Use your free hand to reposition the hammer back to the starting position.
5. Repeat the exercise but slowly turn your palm up and again use your free hand to reposition the hammer.

Parameters: 3 sets of 10 repetitions. Perform once per day, every other day.

Exercise: Wrist Extension Stretch
Goal: Mobility



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1. Extend one arm out keeping your elbow straight and use the other hand to grasp it at the side of the thumb and bend the wrist downward.
2. You should feel a stretch on the top of your forearm and it might be felt up to the elbow.
3. This should not be painful.

Parameters: Hold for 60 seconds, repeating three times. Perform once per day, every day.

Note: these exercises should not be painful. Decrease the weight if experiencing pain.

