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My Aching Elbow!

Are you suffering from pain and tenderness on the outer side of your elbow?

Is it worse when playing Tennis?

Is it also worse with activities such as typing, gripping, turning handles and lifting?

You are probably suffering from *tennis elbow* – or *lateral epicondylitis*.



What is lateral epicondylitis?

Lateral epicondylitis is a condition where tendons that attach to an area near your elbow called the lateral epicondyle, become inflamed. These tendons are what attaches the muscles in your forearm to the elbow. Lateral epicondylitis results from overusing the muscles in your forearm that straighten and raise your forearm and wrist. These muscles then cause the tendon to repeatedly tug on its attachment. Inflammation is caused, followed by tiny tears of the tendon tissues. Later scar tissue develops, often causing tennis elbow to be an ongoing problem.

How can you treat lateral epicondylitis?

- Put ice on your elbow for 15 minutes, every 3-4 hours for 2 days to decrease inflammation.
- Try wearing a tennis elbow strap. This takes the strain off the tendons attachment.
- Do gentle stretches and strengthening shown here; *As long as they do not increase pain!*
- Get a lesson from your tennis coach to ensure your techniques are optimal.
- Modify the grip on your racket, by making it slightly larger.
- Avoid activities (including tennis) that increase the symptoms.
- If symptoms do not resolve, or return every time you return to tennis then you probably need physical therapy.

Physical Therapy – say good bye to tennis elbow forever!

- Ultrasound, heat and ice are used to promote healing.
- An individualized exercise program is recommended specific to your needs to increase strength and flexibility.
- Manual Therapy includes many soft tissue techniques and mobilization techniques to assist in decreasing pain and returning you to the activities you enjoy.
- Low level laser is a popular new treatment which speeds up the healing process.

Exercises to treat and prevent tennis elbow.

The following exercises can be done to prevent the onset of tennis elbow and as part of treatment. Should any of these exercises increase pain please speak with your physician or physical therapist.

Wrist Stretches:

Hold gentle stretch for 20 seconds. Repeat on both arms. Do during your warm up period and after you play tennis.



Strengthening for wrist and forearm:

Hold and keep arms out straight and grasp racket.
Use wrist and hands to turn racket.
Repeat 10 times forward, 10 times backwards.



Strengthening hand muscles:

Hold 2 small balls in pal of hand and use fingers to move balls around in hand.
Repeat 10 times clockwise and 10 times anticlockwise.



The information on this page is provided to you from Performance Physical Therapy. It is not intended to replace any information/treatment provided to you by your health care provider. If you experience any pain while participating in this exercise, please contact your health care provider. Please feel free to check with your Physical Therapist if you have any questions about the information provided on this page.

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