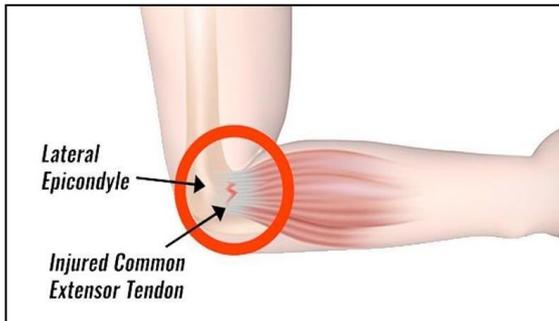


Tennis Elbow

Tennis elbow is a condition that causes pain around the outside of your elbow. It often occurs after strenuous overuse of the muscles and tendons of the forearm, near the elbow joint.



Causes:

The elbow joint is surrounded by muscles that move your elbow, forearm, wrist and fingers. Tennis elbow is usually caused by overusing the muscles attached to your elbow and used to straighten your elbow and your wrist. If these muscles and tendons are strained or overworked, tiny tears and inflammation can develop at the outside of your elbow near the bony lump.

- Playing racquet sports such as tennis, badminton
- Manual work such as plumbing, carpet fitting
- Using a paintbrush or roller while decorating
- Using shears while gardening
- Throwing sports such as the javelin or discus
- Activities that involve fine, repetitive hand and wrist movements such as typing, using scissors, crochet, playing musical instruments such as guitar or violin

Signs and symptoms:

An episode of tennis elbow can usually last between 6 months and 2 years. However about 90% of people will make a full recovery within a year.

- Pain on the outside of your forearm, just below the bend of your elbow which may also travel down your forearm towards your wrist
- Pain when lifting or bending or straightening your arm or with gripping small objects
- Pain when twisting your forearm, such as turning a door handle or opening a jar

Treatment options:

Tennis elbow is a self-limiting condition, which means it will eventually get better without treatment. However, treatment intervention are available that can be used to fasten your recovery;

- Rest, Ice pack (wrapped in towel) to be used for 7-10 minutes several times a day to help ease your pain
- Taking painkillers, such as paracetamol and ibuprofen with advice from pharmacist or doctor can help to reduce pain and inflammation
- Physiotherapy is found helpful in more severe and persistent conditions to relieve pain, stiffness and improve your joint mobility
- Injection of steroid and local anaesthetic if above intervention do not prove to be beneficial can be considered, your physiotherapist or doctor will consider referring you for injection if required.
- Surgery may be used as a last resort to remove the damaged part of the tendon which will be done after the review with orthopaedic consultant.

Prevention is more important to avoid repetitive recurrences of symptoms which involves self-care, avoiding repetitive nature of activities where possible, using tennis elbow splint if advised by doctor or physiotherapist and continuing with exercises given by the physiotherapist to build up your muscle strength are vital measures to be taken for preventing tennis elbow symptoms.

Exercise considerations:

- Do all the exercises within pain free limits, stretch pain is common with exercises and that should ease off within 30 minutes-1 hour after having done the exercises
- Post exercise soreness is quite common and could be felt up to 48 hours after having done the exercise regime. This should get better as you continue with the regime over time
- If any exercise worsens your symptoms, stop that exercise and seek advice from your physiotherapist.