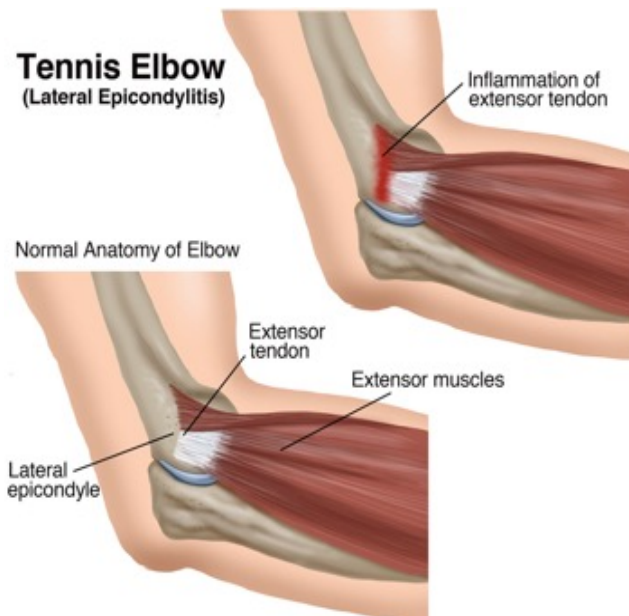




TENNIS ELBOW

What Is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow, or *lateral epicondylitis* is a painful overuse condition that occurs in individuals that participate in repetitive gripping activities. These repetitive motions, such as swinging a racket, can cause strain on the muscles and tendons that insert on the outside of the elbow. Overtime, this can lead to inflammation and microtears in the tendons. Despite the name, tennis elbow can occur in any individual and is the most common reason that people see their doctor for elbow pain.



What Are the Common Symptoms of Tennis Elbow?

- Pain on the outside of the elbow. The pain may or may not radiate to the upper and lower arm.
- Pain when making a fist or gripping items like a tennis racket.
- Pain when shaking hands or turning a door knob.
- Weak grip strength.

What Causes Tennis Elbow?

- Repetitive motion is the primary cause of tennis elbow, making it common in professions like carpentry, painting, plumbing, and auto mechanics.
- Another commonality is weakness in the extensor carpi radialis brevis muscle of the forearm.
- 30-50 years old is the most common age range when tennis elbow presents.

How Is Tennis Elbow Treated?

Conservative treatment is up to 95% effective.

Examples include:

- Rest
- Over-the-counter anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen
- Ice massage
- Bracing
- Physical therapy to strengthen forearm muscles.

Check out the following stretches and strengthening exercises you can do at home!

For an individualize program tailored to your specific needs, please call our office to arrange an appointment with a physical therapist.

*Disclaimer: This is a general exercise program. Please do these exercises to the level of your safety and ability. **It is recommended that they are done under supervision or under the direction of a physical therapist.***

CONSERVATIVE TREATMENT METHODS

ICE MASSAGE TO LATERAL EPICONDYLE

Place direct ice from an ice massage cup to the lateral epicondyle of the elbow as shown (the wrist extensor tendon area). Move the ice in a circular motion for up to 5 minutes (no more). Use towels to catch the water drippings. This is commonly the area of inflammation described with a tennis elbow injury.

You should feel 4 stages of sensation during this process in the following order:

1. Uncomfortable sensation of cold
2. Stinging
3. Burning or aching
4. Numbness

If the pain is too great to handle, lift the ice off your skin for a few seconds, dab the area with a towel and then place the ice back on for a few circular motions and repeat.

! Do not perform for more than 5 minutes, or you may run the risk of frostbite and cause death to the tissue. Use a timer to be safe.

ELBOW BRACING

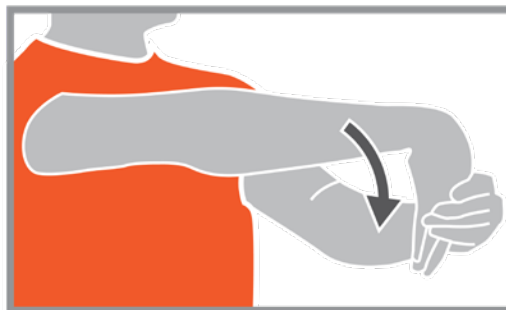
Various models can be found at your local sporting goods store or pharmacy.



STRETCHES AND STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

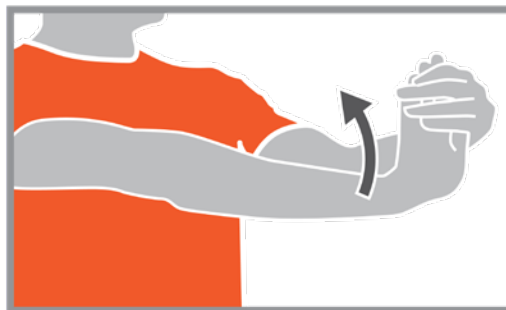
WRIST EXTENSOR STRETCH

- Use your unaffected hand to bend the affected wrist down as shown.
- Keep the elbow on the affected side straight the entire time.



WRIST FLEXOR STRETCH

- Use your unaffected hand to bend the affected wrist up as shown.
- Keep the elbow on the affected side straight the entire time.



FINGER FLEXOR ISOMETRICS W/ TENNIS BALL GRIP

Position #1:

With all 5 fingers holding the ball, slowly flex your fingers and grip the ball. Do not attempt to squeeze too hard or too fast – only squeeze and hold the position to where you can tolerate.

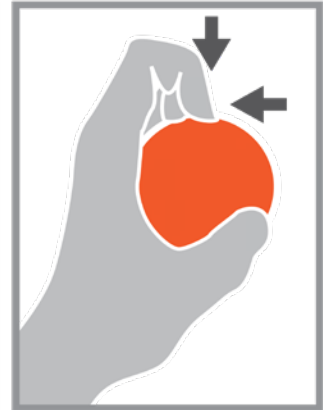
Position #2:

As you feel more comfortable, slowly bring your fingers into a more arched position. Using the tips of your fingertips, squeeze and hold the ball.

① Grip the ball.

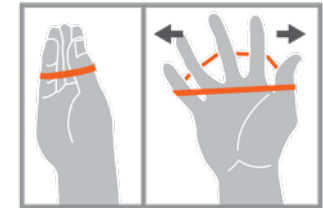
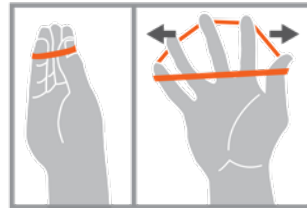


② Arch fingers and squeeze.



RUBBER BAND FINGER SPREADS

- Place a rubber band around the tips of your fingers and spread your fingers apart.
- Place the rubber band around the middle knuckle and repeat the process.



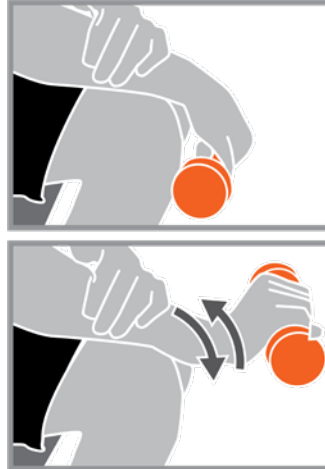
FREE WEIGHT SUPINATION AND PRONATION

Rest your forearm on your knee or a table. Next, while holding the end of a small free weight/dumbbell, slowly lower the weight towards the outside and rotate your forearm towards the inside of your body as shown.



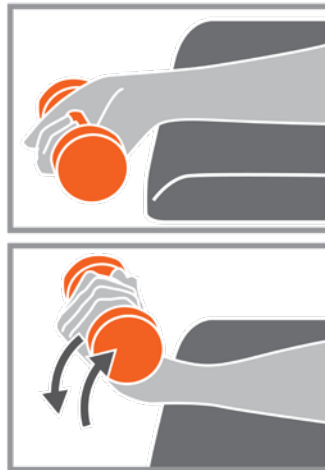
WRIST EXTENSION CURLS – FREE WEIGHT – THIGH

While holding a small free weight/dumbbell, place your forearm on your thigh and bend your wrist up and down with your palm facing downward, as shown.



WRIST FLEXION CURLS – TABLE

Hold a small free weight/dumbbell, rest your forearm on a table and bend your wrist up and down with your palm facing up as shown.



FREE WEIGHT RADIAL DEVIATION – TABLE

Rest your forearm on your knee or a table. Next, while holding the end of a small free weight/dumbbell, slowly lower the weight towards the outside and rotate your forearm towards the inside of your body as shown.

