



Polyclinics
SingHealth

Tennis Elbow



*Disclaimer: Please note that the instructions shown are strictly for general information only.
If you have any queries, kindly check with your healthcare provider.*



SCAN ME



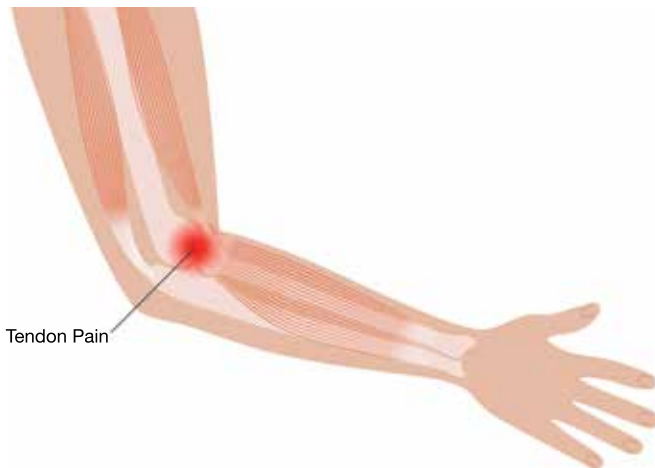
What is tennis elbow?

Tennis elbow is also known as lateral epicondylitis.

It is a common elbow pain condition due to overuse and injury in the tendons of your forearm muscles at the outside of the elbow.

The tendons and muscles of the forearm become inflamed, causing pain and swelling.

While most commonly associated with playing tennis, it can occur in anyone whose work requires forceful or repetitive forearm usage, such as painters, plumbers, carpenters, cooks and butchers.



What are the common causes of tennis elbow?

- Forceful or repetitive forearm usage
- More than 2 hours work each session
- Poor playing technique of any racquet sports and improper grip size



How can you prevent tennis elbow?

- Avoid continuous duration of play or activity
- Do adequate warm up exercises before any strenuous or repetitive activity to the forearm
- Avoid increasing training intensity quickly
- Use correct playing technique
- Use proper sizing of racquets



What are the signs & symptoms of tennis elbow?

- Pain and tenderness over the outside of your elbow, often spreading down your forearm towards your wrist
- Pain when using your arm, such as writing, holding objects, bending or straightening the elbow
- Symptoms may be activity related initially, but the pain may become constant in chronic cases



How long does it take to recover?

- With treatment, acute elbow pain following initial injury normally improves within 1-2 weeks
- Proper rehabilitation is important to train the forearm muscles to avoid recurrence of pain and injury
- The outcome is variable depending on extent of injury, as well as your compliance to the rehabilitation programme
- A period of observation with conservative management of at least 6 months duration is generally recommended



You should seek medical attention early if you have...

- Intense elbow pain or movement restriction following a fall or trauma
- A hot swollen elbow joint
- Elbow pain associated with neck and arm pain
- Unexplained weight loss
- Frequent pains, and it recurs despite adequate rest and painkillers



Do you need an imaging scan?






Imaging scan is not needed to diagnose tennis elbow. Diagnosis can be made clinically through history and physical examination.

Your doctor may order an X-ray only when necessary to exclude other possible causes of pain.



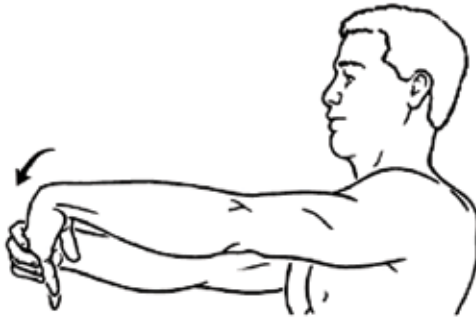
What are the treatment options?

Depending on the condition and severity, your healthcare provider may recommend:

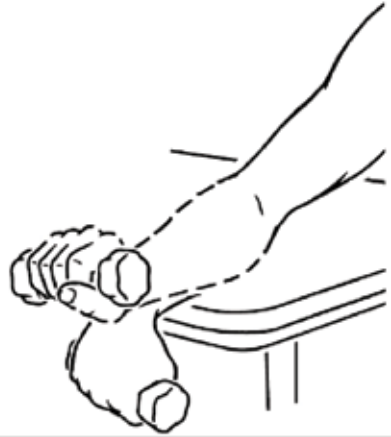
Activity modification	Medications	Physiotherapy
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjust work-related ergonomics to reduce forearm strain• Reduce repetitive task and use lighter load in your daily activity for several weeks to facilitate recovery• Correction of playing technique in sports• Counterforce bracing or tennis elbow strap	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paracetamol and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can reduce pain and inflammation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appropriate exercise programme can improve your pain and regain your normal arm functions• Physical modalities help to relieve your pain and promote recovery. For example, Extracorporeal shockwave therapy (ESWT), where shock waves (inaudible, high energy sound waves) are passed through the skin to the affected area using a special device. This may be given in one or more sessions
Injections	Specialist referral	
		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corticosteroid injections may be used to reduce the inflammation in the tendons if the medication or physiotherapy does not improve the condition• However, repeated steroid injections is not recommended due to increased risk for tendon rupture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tennis elbow usually does not need specialist treatment• Your doctor will only refer you to see a specialist when necessary for further investigation and treatment procedures	

Simple home exercises:

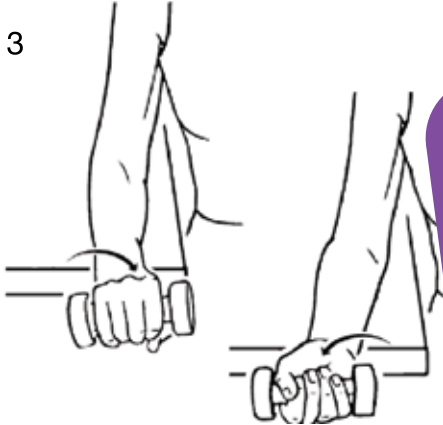
1



2



3



**You may perform these exercises
2-3 times a week:**

1. Forearm muscles (wrist extensors)
stretch: **Hold 30 seconds, 3 repetitions**
2. Wrist extension using light weight:
**Hold 10 seconds, 10 repetitions x
3 sets**
3. Forearm rotations using light weight:
**Hold 10 seconds, 10 repetitions x
3 sets**

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Note:

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