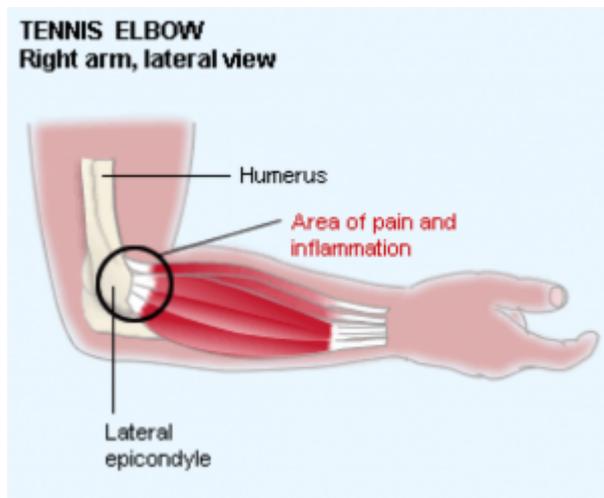


## Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis)

Tennis elbow, or as it is known in medical terms, lateral epicondylitis, is as an overuse injury where the muscles of the forearm become damaged causing pain to the outer elbow.



### Causes -

Tennis elbow occurs when the muscles on the top of the forearm are overused from repetitive movements, particularly twisting and gripping. These movements can cause tiny micro-tears in the tendon which leads to the pain you feel.

You are more likely to get tennis elbow if

1. Your work or hobbies involve repeated twisting and gripping actions, such as gardening, tennis, carpenters, plasterers and other hand work industries.
2. Your forearm muscles are 'unfit'. For example, if you suddenly play a lot of tennis on holiday, prune all the roses at once or you take on a DIY home project and not used to heavy work. This sudden overuse of the forearm muscles can bring on tennis elbow due to lack of conditioning.

### Symptoms –

You may have some or all of the following symptoms.

- Pain traveling from the outer elbow, muscles of the forearm and towards the wrist
- Pain with twisting and gripping actions. Eg. Turning a door handle, opening a jar, using a screwdriver
- Pain usually worse with activity and better after rest
- Tight muscles in forearm
- Difficulty and/or weakness gripping, using fork and knife, writing with a pen or holding a mug
- In severe cases, a constant ache even after rest.

## Treatment -

### YOU (at home)

- Rest from aggravating activities
- Ice-packs to the outer elbow (10 minutes, 2x daily)
- Gentle self-massage to outer elbow and muscles of the forearm (5minutes, 2x daily)
- Anti-inflammatory tablets or gel cream (ask your health professional before use)
- Gentle exercises (do not push through pain)
  - Elbow - gently bend and straighten elbow 10x each direction
  - Wrist - gently move wrist up and down 10x each direction

### Your Physiotherapist

- Acupuncture/ dry needling
- Cupping
- Ultrasound treatment
- Deep massage and trigger point therapy
- Prescribe tennis elbow brace
- Stretching and strengthening exercises
- Home Program to prevent reoccurrence

Other options for more severe cases may involve steroid injections and in extreme cases where the muscle is completely torn, surgery may be necessary.

## When to seek help –

It is time to see the physio if any of the following are true

- You have had your pain for more than 2weeks
- Your pain is worsening
- You have attempted 2days of rest, gentle self massage and ice do not notice any significant improvement
- You have a deadline (eg return to sport or work)

If left untreated, tennis elbow can remain for months and years, but with immediate attention and physiotherapy, you can often start to see improvements often after the first 2 treatments (depending on severity).