



I've got
"Tennis Elbow"
....now what?

Does this sound familiar?

- Pain that radiates from the outside of your elbow into your forearm and wrist
- Pain when you extend your wrist
- Forearm weakness
- Pain that gets worse over weeks or months
- A painful grip during certain activities, such as shaking hands or turning a doorknob
- An inability to hold certain objects, such as a coffee cup

So what should I do?

- Protect your elbow from further injury by not using the joint.
- Give your elbow a rest. But don't avoid all activity. Sometimes, wearing a forearm splint at night helps reduce morning symptoms.
- Use a cold pack, ice massage, slush bath or compression sleeve filled with cold water to limit swelling after an injury. Try to apply ice as soon as possible after the injury.
- Use an elastic wrap or bandage to compress the injured area.
- Keep your elbow above heart level when possible to help prevent or limit swelling.

What is the best way to heal?

Stretching

Gentle stretching exercises including wrist flexion, extension, and rotation. The elbow should be extended and not flexed to increase the amount of stretch as required. These stretches should be held for 20-30 seconds and repeated 5-10 times, at least twice a day. Vigorous stretching should be avoided - do not stretch to the point of pain that reproduces your symptoms.

Strengthening

With the elbow bent and the wrist supported perform the following exercises:

Wrist Extension. Place 1 lb. weight (or soup can) in hand with palm facing downward; support forearm at the edge of a table or on your knee so that only your hand can move. Raise wrist/hand up slowly, and lower slowly.

Wrist Flexion. Place 1 lb. weight (or soup can) in hand with palm facing upward; support forearm at the edge of a table or on your knee so that only your hand can move. Bend wrist up slowly, and then lower slowly (similar to exercise above).

Forearm Pronation/Supination. Grasp hammer (wrench, or some similar tool) in hand with forearm supported. Rotate hand to palm down position, return to start position (hammer perpendicular to floor), rotate to palm up position, repeat. To increase or decrease resistance, move hand farther away or closer towards the head of the hammer.

Finger Extension. Place a rubber band around all five finger tips. Spread fingers 25 times, repeat 3 times. If resistance is not enough, add a second rubber band or use a rubber band of greater thickness which will provide more resistance.

Ball Squeeze. Place rubber ball or tennis ball in palm of hand, squeeze 25 times, repeat 3 times. If pain is reproduced squeeze a folded sponge or piece of foam.

For all of the exercises (except combined flexion\extension) perform 10 repetitions 3-5 times a day. With the combined flexion/extension perform until you feel fatigue. With all exercises use pain as your guide - all exercises should be pain free. "No Pain No Gain" does NOT apply here.

After exercising, massage across the area of tenderness with an ice cube for about 5 minutes. You might also try filling a paper cup half-full with water and freeze; peel back a portion of the paper cup to expose the ice.

Information from Tennis Elbow at *About.com*

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