



Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis)

What is tennis elbow?

Tennis elbow is an injury to a tendon in your outer elbow. This tendon helps you move your wrist and fingers. This tendon can be injured from repetitive overuse of the wrist and forearms. A common symptom is pain with gripping & twisting (like giving a handshake or opening doors). Most people with tennis elbow don't have swelling, bruising, or numbness. This tendon can become inflamed (tendonitis) and is prone to becoming chronic (tendinosis) where it develops scar tissue.



What causes tennis elbow?

It can be caused by repetitive movements (ie: painting, using a hammer, or playing racquet sports or golf). But, sometimes, we don't know why a person gets Tennis Elbow.

Acute Tx:

- Anti-inflammatory medicines (ie: *topical Voltaren*, Ibuprofen, Advil, Naprosyn,)
- Tennis elbow brace (counterforce brace)
- Physical Therapy – especially eccentric exercises, shoulder and upper back mechanics
- Modify movements – limit gripping/twisting activities, especially with palm of the hand facing down
- Cortisone injections – more effective for acute or subacute cases

Chronic Tx:

- Physical Therapy – including especially eccentric exercises
- Thera-band Flexbar
- Nitroglycerin patches
- Shock wave therapy
- Orthobiologic injections – Prolotherapy or Platelet Rich Plasma (PRP) injections
- Surgery (last resort) – rarely needed

Mishra A, et al. "Treatment of Chronic Elbow Tendinosis with Buffered Platelet-Rich Plasma." AJSM 2006.

Exercises for Tennis Elbow:

ECCENTRIC WRIST EXERCISES:

Use a small weight or canned food (for weight) and hold with wrist in extension (palm down). Then, slowly lower wrist. This should cause discomfort, but not severe pain. Keep elbow/arm straight. Repeat 10 times with 3 sets.



DOWNWARD WRIST STRETCH:

Hold one arm straight out in front of you, and hold the hand with the other hand. Slowly bend your wrist down (and slightly out) until you feel a stretch. Hold for 20- 30 seconds, then relax. Repeat 2-3 times daily.



Thera-band Flexbar:

Search YouTube for videos of various exercises

