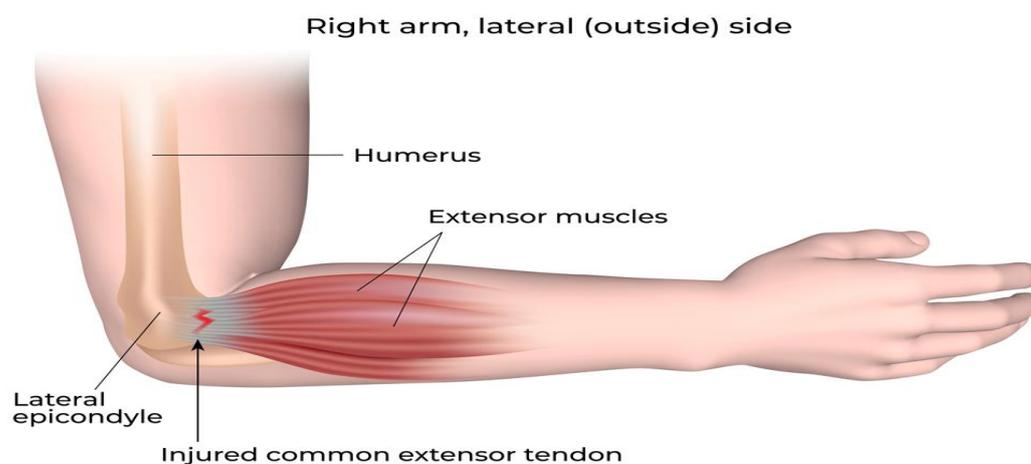


## Tennis elbow ( Lateral epicondylitis)

Tennis elbow is a condition that results in pain around the outside of your elbow. Around your elbow you have a collection of muscles, ligaments, tendons and bone; an injury to the muscles is what causes the pain.



### Mechanism of injury

You may develop tennis elbow for a variety of reasons. It is most commonly seen in the working population, and most people experience symptoms on their dominant side. It may result from the repetitive overuse of your elbow, for example by doing the same movement over and over again which results in stress in the muscle, occasionally causing micro tears which may lead to pain.

### Symptoms

You may develop pain in and around your elbow, in particular it may be uncomfortable around the outside of your elbow and forearm. Other symptoms you may experience include pain on gripping, lifting or repetitive wrist activity. You may also find that the stiffness is eased with gentle movement.

### Management

Ice: a cold pack (ice pack or frozen peas wrapped in a damp towel) can provide short-term pain relief. Apply this to the sore area for up to 15 minutes, every three hours and up to four times a day, ensuring the ice is never in direct contact with the skin.

1. Relative rest: reduce activities that are making your symptoms worse, for example, the length of time you use your hand and elbow.

2. Painkillers: pain relief can help manage the discomfort in the short term. Normally painkillers bought from a pharmacist will work. If you have any questions please speak to a pharmacist.

3. Splint: if your symptoms are not improving then you may benefit from a wrist splint, these will look to reduce the load through your elbow. You can get one of these from a pharmacy or online.

4. Exercise: you should complete specific exercises that aim to increase the strength of your arm; this will help you return to activities. Please see below for suggestions of a graded exercise programme.

## Exercises

The aim is to stretch and strengthen the extensor muscles, these should be done regularly. How is tennis elbow treated?

### Extensor tendon stretch



Put the back of your hand against a wall and keep your elbow straight by supporting it with the other hand. Feel the stretch along the back of your forearm. Hold the stretch for 20 seconds and repeat twice. To increase the stretch, slide your hand further up the wall.

### Eccentric strengthening exercise



#### Eccentric Wrist Extensor Strengthening

Photo Credit: <http://www.clubsatcrp.com> ; Modified by Rehab For a Better Life – Andrew Tan

Sit with your forearm resting on a table with your hand over the edge, palm facing down. Hold a light weight (e.g. a tin or water bottle) in your hand. Lift the weight and your wrist up with your

good hand. Then taking your good hand away, slowly lower the weight down using your bad hand only. Your forearm should stay on the table at all times. Repeat 15 times and do three sets.

You may find the exercises painful, especially for the first two weeks. This is expected, but the pain should not be severe. After one week, increase the exercise to three sets of 10-15. If your symptoms are not improving within six weeks of following the above steps, please make an appointment with your GP to discuss further, as you may benefit from assessment by a physiotherapist.