

ELBOW PAIN

Due to
Lateral Epicondylitis “Tennis Elbow”

WHAT IS IT?

Pain at or near the elbow due to microtrauma and tissue degeneration in the forearm muscles at the tendon attachment.

WHAT CAUSES IT?

Muscle weakness, muscle imbalance or muscle stiffness due to overuse, repetitious or forceful movements of the wrist or elbow.

Poor body mechanics or ergonomics in the home or workplace.

WHAT MAY I EXPECT?

Your forearm may feel much better after a period of rest, but the problem will most likely come back if you do not take steps to protect the muscle from further injury. This condition usually takes several weeks to months to fully heal.

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?

- **Modify Your Activities** to be pain-free. Do not continue to stress the muscle.
- **Ice** painful area for 10-15 minutes, 3-6 times per day.
- Maintain “**NEUTRAL**” wrist position – see back of handout
- A **Tennis Elbow Band** worn around the fullest part of the forearm may be helpful.
- **Stretch** 3 times per day to start. Gradually increase to once an hour. See back.
- **Massage** the painful area. Rub with your thumb across the tender area. This can be painful. Start with 5 seconds and work up to 1 minute. Start with once per day and gradually increase to once an hour.

WHEN SHOULD I CALL MY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER?

If you have consistently followed the advice of this handout for 6 weeks and experience no further improvement. If you develop pain radiating into the upper arm or neck.
If you develop numbness in your thumb or index finger.

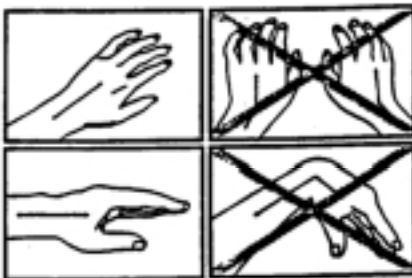
ACTIVITY GUIDELINES TO PROMOTE HEALING

Use Good Posture – A slouching posture is more likely to place the wrists and elbows in a poor position for a task



Knees about the same level as hips or lower.

Use Neutral Wrist Position – for typing or tool use



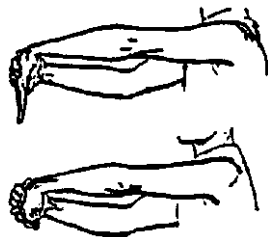
Correct Positions: Incorrect Positions

Avoid Long Reaches – and keep elbows bent and close to your sides when using tools or lifting objects

Rotate Your Tasks – This allows you to change positions and use different muscles

Take Your Work Breaks – Use breaks to go for a short walk, do stretches and relax muscles

Stretch, Ice and Massage – 3-4 times per day



Avoid Forceful Gripping

At Your Desk

- Modify your pen, mouse, or tools to make the grip soft, large and rough rather than small, hard and slippery. Use pen sleeves, grippers, foam sleeves from hair curlers, sponge material or cloth tape.
- When using a mouse, relax your hand and click gently or try a trackball or finger pointing device.

In Your Car

- Use a padded steering wheel cover

Using Tools

- Use power tools instead of small hand tools
- Place an extender on the tool
- Avoid use of heavy vibrating tools

Lifting Objects

- Use both hands and arms
- Fill bags with less weight

In Your Kitchen

- In the kitchen, scoot rather than lift heavy objects
- Sharpen your knives
- Hold pot handle with palm up to drain liquids

Performing Personal Care

- Grasp hair brush, toothbrush lightly
- Move slowly