



Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy
Information for patients

Tennis Elbow

Introduction

Tennis elbow is pain in the tendon where it inserts into the elbow and connects to the muscles that lift the wrist and fingers. Symptoms often include pain on the outside of the elbow and tenderness on touching this area. Activities such as excessive lifting especially with the palm facing down, and gripping can reproduce symptoms.

Key points to remember about tennis elbow:

1. It is a self-limiting condition – it has been shown to improve with time.
2. 90% of people are better after 1 year.
3. Activity modification and simple exercises will generally control the symptoms in most people but it will take time. For example, lift with palm up rather than palm down or have rest days from heavier activity involving the arm.

What can I do to help ease the symptoms?

- Relative rest - Resting the elbow between bouts of activity or by reducing sport for a few weeks can make a big difference.
- Be aware of the amount of force that you use to grip things. Try and use the minimum amount of force to maintain contact.
- Try to pace yourself when carrying out activities that place load on the arm particularly if you are not used to doing them. This could be sports, DIY, gardening, playing musical instruments but could also be lighter activities around the house. Look at your workstation and activities and take regular breaks
- Altering the grip size on objects you use may also have some beneficial effect. Often enlarging the grip helps and reducing the weight of rackets/tools etc. is useful.
- If you are involved in a sport or hobby using repetitive movements, seek expert advice on your technique.
- Using a brace may be helpful if the pain is severe. They aim to decrease the tension on the tendon. Place the brace just below the painful area (i.e. 2 to 3 finger widths below the bony part of the elbow). Wear it when you are using your arm and take it off at night/resting. Experiment with the brace in slightly different places. You can obtain the splints from many sources including the internet (tennis elbow clasp - www.amazon.co.uk), or some chemists will obtain one for you.

The following exercises may be helpful in the management of tennis elbow when done with the previous advice:-



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Place your forearm palm down on a table. Move your wrist up towards the ceiling whilst using your other hand or a rubber exercise band around your knuckles to stop the movement. This exercise may be painful – if so reduce the force of the exercise.

Repeat 3x10 twice day



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Stand or sit. Bend your elbow and hold a tin of beans with your palm facing down. Bend your wrist up assisting the movement with your other hand.



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Slowly lower your hand down without assistance from the other hand.

Repeat 3x10 twice daily



For further information

Please ring our Booking Office on **0191 4452643** or visit our website at: **www.tims.nhs.uk** which provides online guidance and support on managing your musculoskeletal (MSK) condition effectively.

The NHS website also provides trusted online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare to help you manage your condition and/or inform your choices about your health: **www.nhs.uk**

Feedback

We also welcome feedback from patients about their experiences with our service and this can be done through our patient advice and liaison (PALS) team on **0800 032 0202** or **northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk**

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Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Service

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