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# Tennis Elbow

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## Introduction

Tennis elbow is pain in the tendon on the outside of the elbow. This tendon 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. Many activities including sports, computer use and lifting can reproduce the symptoms.

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### 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.

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### 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](http://www.amazon.co.uk)), or some chemists will obtain one for you.

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**The following exercises may be helpful in the management of tennis elbow.**

**You may feel some discomfort during these exercises but overall your elbow pain should not increase while you are doing the exercises.**

**Stop the exercises if your pain significantly worsens.**

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Place your forearm palm down on a table. Move your wrist up towards the ceiling whilst using your other hand 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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### [Video](#)



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In sitting or standing bend your elbow up and down ten times.

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### **For further information**

Please email [ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net](mailto:ghnt.newcastlegatesheadtims@nhs.net), ring on **0191 2138800** or visit our website at: [www.tims.nhs.uk](http://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](http://www.nhs.uk).

### **Useful links**

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) can offer on-the-spot advice and information about the NHS. You can contact them on freephone **0800 032 02 02** or e-mail [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk).



### **Tyneside Integrated Musculoskeletal Service**

TIMS is a partnership between Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust