



Kinesis
Medical Centre

Elbow Pain

Common Extensor Tendinopathy

(aka “tennis elbow”)

“Tennis elbow” is a common condition that affects the outside surface of the elbow. It results from injury or overuse (or a combination of both) to the tendons in that region. Most injuries to these tendons will resolve uneventfully, but occasionally the pain can become chronic or recurrent. This can lead to difficulty gripping or lifting objects, pain that radiates down the forearm, and pain with twisting or rotating the hand.

There are many other structures in and around the elbow that can cause pain, so it is important to consult a medical professional to properly diagnose which structure(s) is/are contributing to your pain. They will examine you thoroughly to identify any biomechanical or activity-related factors that may be indirectly contributing to the problem, and can guide further investigations and treatments.

Exercises play an important role in improving pain related to tendinopathies. More specifically, exercises focusing on **eccentric** strengthening have demonstrated efficacy for a variety of tendinopathies¹. The following active rehabilitation program is designed with this in mind - targeting progressive eccentric loading of the tendons that cause tennis elbow. This program is to be performed five to seven days per week.

The “Key Exercises” should progress to **heavier and heavier resistance**. Each week, use a slightly heavier weight than the previous week. Some soreness is to be expected while you are doing these exercises. But if this increased pain lasts more than a day or two, consider going back to your previous weight.

“Strength does not come from winning. Your struggles develop your strength.”
-- Arnold Schwarzenegger

Need help?

Physiotherapy

Your physical therapist and athletic trainers also play a critical role in the rehabilitation process by coaching you through the exercises and ensuring that they are being performed correctly. They can also provide symptomatic relief in the form of soft tissue modalities (active release, deep heat, TENS, etc.).

1) Marc T. Galloway, Andrea L. Lalley, Jason T. Shearn, The Role of Mechanical Loading in Tendon Development, Maintenance, Injury, and Repair. J Bone Joint Surg Am. 2013 Sep 4; 95(17): 1620–1628.

Warm Up



Keep your elbow straight while doing these wrist/forearm stretches. Hold for 10 seconds.



Grip firmly, hold for 10 seconds, then release.



Extend your fingers apart against the resistance of a rubber band. Hold for 10 seconds.

Key Exercises

Eccentric wrist extension



1. Hold a weight in your hand and rest your forearm on a table with your elbow straight, wrist over the edge or the table, and palm facing down.
2. Use your free hand to help lift the weight as high as possible while keeping your forearm on the table.
3. With the one hand only, lower the weight in a slow and controlled fashion.
4. Repeat Steps 2 and 3.

*** As you progress, continue to increase the weight to the point when you are just barely able to keep the weight held still against gravity.

Eccentric supination



1. Hold a hammer vertical with you hand in a neutral position - palm facing sideways, thumb up).
2. Slowly rotate your forearm until your palm is facing down, resisting against the weight of the hammer throughout the entire motion.
3. Use your free hand to reposition the hammer vertical. Repeat.

*** As you progress, you can use heavier or longer objects (umbrella, broom, hockey stick, baseball bat, golf clubs, etc.). You can also adjust the resistance by holding the objects further from the center of gravity.