

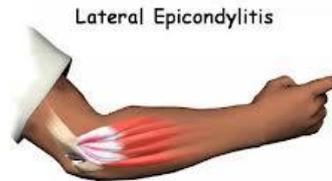


Tennis Elbow

Research has demonstrated that **Physiotherapy treatment can be highly effective in the treatment of acute and chronic “tennis elbow”**. Tennis elbow, or “lateral epicondylalgia” as it has more recently been named, often involves more than localised pathology around the elbow.

Research

Tennis elbow, or lateral epicondylalgia, is a common affliction not often related to actually playing tennis. Research has demonstrated that if tennis elbow pain has been present for about **8 weeks**, or if the condition has been active previously, then there will also be a neck component maintaining the pain and dysfunction rather than just a local elbow problem.



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What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow can certainly be caused by racquet sports, but it is common in any sport or occupation that involves gripping or throwing eg weightlifting or canoeing, or carpentry and brick laying. You will feel pain with gripping and lifting.

Where Is Tennis Elbow Pain Felt?

You'll feel pain over the outside bump of the elbow. This bump is known as your lateral epicondyle. The medical term for tennis elbow is "lateral epicondylalgia" meaning a painful lateral epicondyle. Typically you'll suffer sharp localised pain over the bony bump. As the condition deteriorates, the forearm muscles become tender and remain in a spasm-like contraction.

What's the Cause of Tennis Elbow?

Like most overuse injuries, it is most commonly caused by repeated microtrauma. You may not have allowed the injury to ever fully heal and ultimately it becomes increasingly painful. It may also be caused if you do an activity that you are not used to, and your muscles are not strong enough to keep doing the activity (such as pruning in the garden).

How is Tennis Elbow Diagnosed?

Your physiotherapist or doctor regularly diagnoses these injuries. X-rays are often normal so not useful. An ultrasound scan may show tears within the tendon. Research has shown that the neck joints of C5 and C6 are common referrers of pain down to the elbow. Always ask your physiotherapist or doctor to examine your neck for tenderness. Your symptoms may be cured by treating your neck and your elbow! Unfortunately, delaying treatment is not good. The longer you experience pain the more likely it is that you'll develop compensatory problems in your neck, shoulder or forearm.

What's the Best Treatment for Tennis Elbow?

During the acute phase, rest is vital. "No Pain ... No Gain" is usually wrong. Apply ice 2 or 3 times daily to reduce inflammation and pain. Anti-inflammatory medication or gels can work very well. Recent research has shown that physiotherapy is better than cortisone injections in the medium to long-term. In addition to hastening the healing rate, your physio will ensure that the perfect musculoskeletal environment is present to avoid any recurrence. Sometimes cortisone injections are good to settle the pain to assist with physiotherapy management.

When Should You Use a Tennis Elbow Brace?

A tennis elbow brace can be very effective from the moment you put it on. In these instances, the brace will dissipate the stressful gripping forces away from your injured structures. However, tennis elbow braces do not work in 100% of cases. In our experience, we recommend that you seek physiotherapy assistance in these cases. In stubborn cases, you have a very high likelihood of referred symptoms from your C5/C6. Only a thorough examination of your neck, shoulder, elbow and upper limb nerve structures will confirm your diagnosis and direct which treatment options will assist you the quickest.