

# INFORMATION SHEET

## TENNIS ELBOW

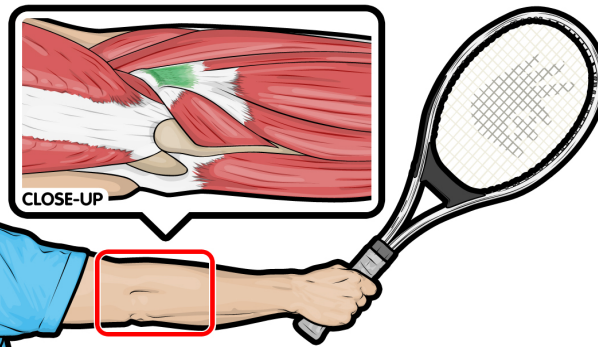
### CAUSES & MANAGEMENT

Lateral epicondylalgia (commonly known as tennis elbow) is a condition in which the tendons that attach to the outside of the elbow become damaged. This results in pain and tenderness on the outside of the elbow and forearm, which is often exacerbated by hand and elbow actions (such as gripping, picking up objects, opening doors and carrying). Tennis elbow is most common in people between 30-50 years of age. It is frequently seen in racquet sports but is also common in the building and manufacturing.

Tennis elbow occurs as a result of unaccustomed or repetitive use of the muscles of the forearm. These repetitive movements cause microscopic tears and deterioration of tendon fibres. New blood vessels form in the tendon and it is thought that these vessels contain pain nerve-endings that lead to the elbow pain.

Tennis elbow will often not improve on its own and seeking treatment early will result in a faster resolution of symptoms. Your healthcare professional will utilise a range of treatment methods that may include: ice; soft tissue therapy to the forearm muscles; mobilisations of the elbow, wrist or neck joints; stretching and strengthening exercises; or acupuncture.

To minimise further damage and irritation to the injured tendons, avoid activities that aggravate your pain and when picking objects up ensure your palm faces upwards.

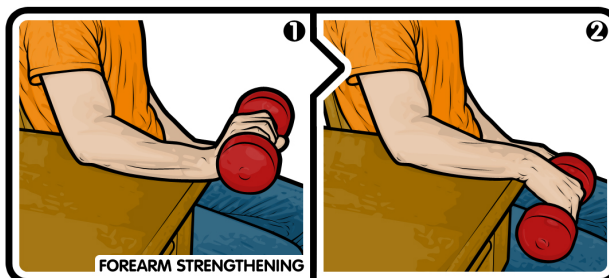


A tennis elbow brace, worn just below the painful area, will also lessen the irritation to the injured tendons. This can be especially useful if certain aggravating activities cannot be avoided.

Icing your elbow is thought to decrease new blood vessel formation and therefore decrease pain. Apply ice to the painful area everyday, especially at the end of the day or after activity/sport, for 15-20 minutes. Applying an anti-inflammatory gel to the painful area after icing can also be helpful.



Once your elbow pain begins to lessen, your healthcare professional will probably provide you with some exercises to help the tendons heal properly and reduce the pain completely. This will most likely involve a combination of stretching and strengthening exercises for the involved muscles.



#### How to avoid recurrence:

- It is important to attend the full course of rehabilitation sessions so that you receive all the information and exercises you will need for a full resolution of your current symptoms and to avoid a recurrence in the future.
- Your healthcare professional may prescribe you exercises for other arm and shoulder muscles to reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
- It may be necessary to modify actions in your job or daily activities to reduce any repetitive load on the tendons.
- If your tennis elbow was caused through playing sport (e.g. tennis, golf) it is advisable to have your technique/grip checked as this may have led to the development of your elbow pain.