

Tennis Elbow

Patient Information

Therapy Services



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Tennis Elbow

Tennis elbow is a chronic degenerate condition of the tendon on the outside of the elbow. This means wear of the tendon that extends your wrist. The tendon becomes less healthy, this is known as tendinopathy. It is also known as lateral epicondylitis.

Cause

The exact cause is unknown. We do know that repetitive use of the tendons that extend the wrist (move the hand back) can contribute. For example gripping and twisting.

It can also be secondary to another problem in the arm, e.g. a shoulder problem.

Symptoms

The first signs of tennis elbow are usually tenderness and pain over the outside of the elbow. Pain often occurs when moving your hand back or making a fist. It is often worsened by activities that involve lifting, gripping, or twisting of the hand and wrist. In some cases the pain can progress down the forearm.

Management

Tennis elbow is a self-limiting condition. This means that it will eventually settle. You can choose not to treat it, but to allow it to get better on its own. However, as the pain can be disabling, there are methods of management that can improve the pain and speed up recovery.

First Line Treatment

This includes modifying activities to avoid pain, review of sports techniques and physiotherapy. The use of an exercise programme has been found to be effective in improving the function of the tendon and reducing pain.

Anti-inflammatory pain killers may be beneficial within three weeks of onset of symptoms but beyond this are no more effective than simple painkillers such as paracetamol.

Injection Therapy

Traditionally steroid injections have been used but recent evidence has raised concerns regarding recurrence of symptoms. Alternative injection treatments include:

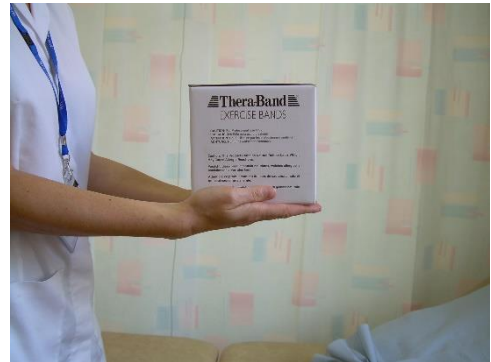
- Plasma Rich Protein (PRP) (blood plasma that is enriched with platelets and injected into an area of the body for the purpose of healing)
- Autologous Whole Blood (a sample of your own blood is injected into an area of the body for the purpose of healing)
- Dry Needling
- Hyaluron injections

Surgery

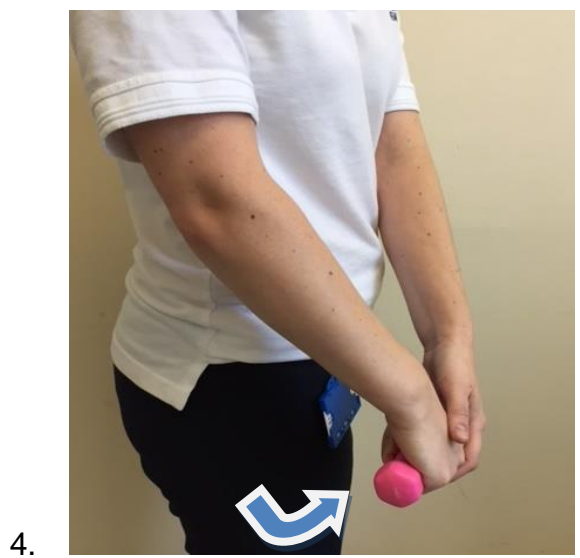
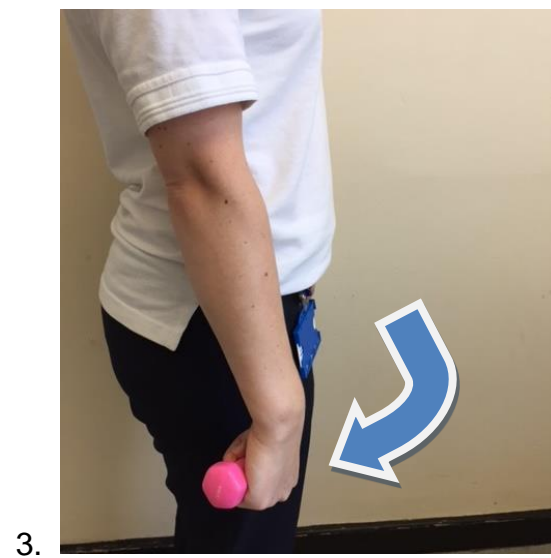
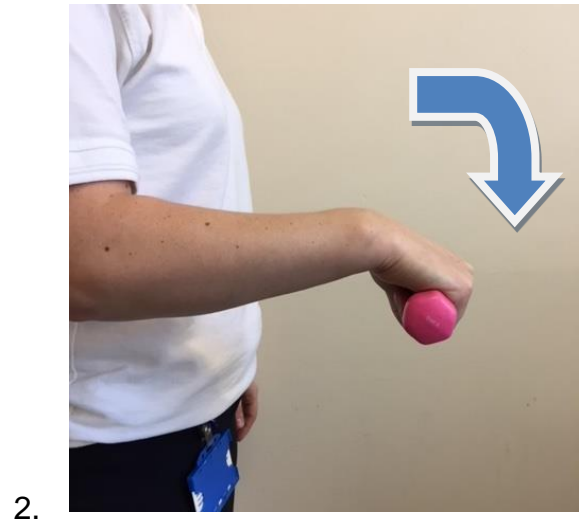
Surgery is the last resort and can be performed as an open or keyhole (arthroscopic) procedure.

Rest

Rest will improve your pain. This can be difficult, especially if your work duties or sports activities aggravate it. Your symptoms can be helped by avoiding lifting/carrying objects with the backs of your hands facing upwards. See photographs below.



Specific Exercise



- Exercises must be performed exactly as shown on the photographs.

- Exercises should be performed very slowly.
- You **must** use your opposite hand to lift up the hand being exercised.
- **The exercise should be repeated to fatigue, and should be carried out in sets, with a minute rest in between each set. Your physiotherapist will be able to advise further.**
- You should do the exercises daily. It may be helpful to use an exercise diary to remind you.
- It is common for the discomfort to initially worsen. This may feel like a slightly different pain. However, if you continue with the exercises, by week 3, it should start to improve.
- When starting the exercises use a small water bottle approximately half full of water. After a week add more water and continue to do so until full. If you then want to make the bottle heavier you could fill it with sand, rice, or sugar for example, or use a heavier object.
- If you do not have your bottle to hand use anything of a similar weight e.g. a TV remote, or a hole punch if at work.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends, and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Albert Edward Infirmary
Wigan Lane
Wigan WN1 2NN

Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



How We Use Your Information

For details on how we collect, use, and store the information we hold about you, please see patient information leaflet, Ref. **Corp 006** How we use your information, this can be found on the Patient Information Leaflets page on the Trust website, see details on the front cover.

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille, and other languages upon request. For more information, please ask in the department/ward.

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