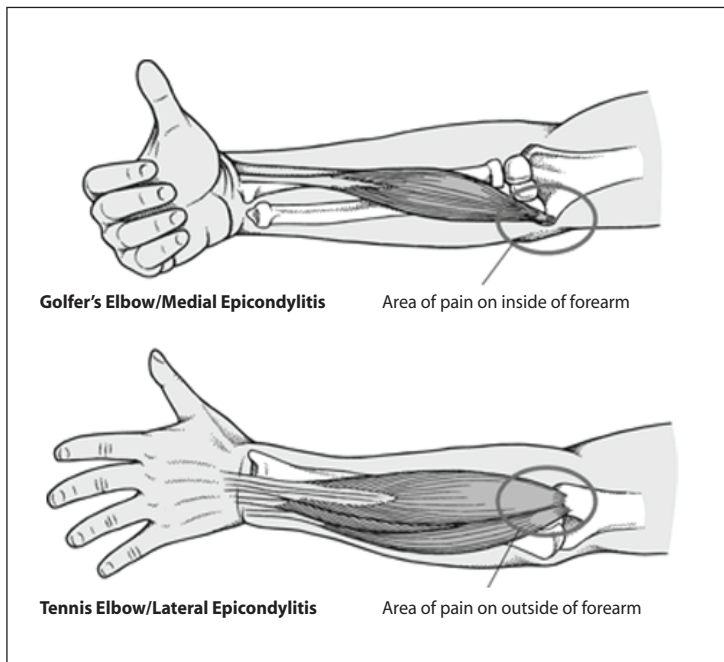


# Tennis/Golf Elbow

## Management and Treatment

Tennis elbow and Golfer's elbow are painful conditions affecting the muscles around the elbow. Tennis elbow affects the muscles on the outside part of the elbow; while golfer's elbow affects the inside part of the elbow. They are similar conditions where the forearm muscles get overused, the only difference being the location of the pain.

### How do you get a tennis elbow or golfer's elbow?

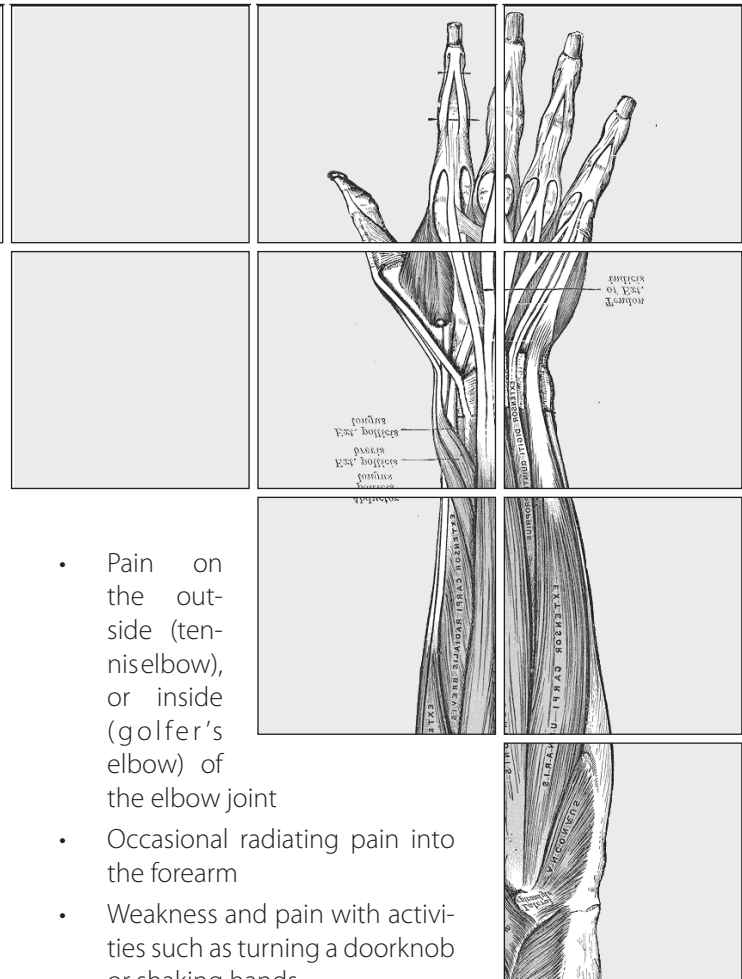


As their names suggest, tennis elbow and golfer's elbow are conditions that tennis and golf players are susceptible to. This is often due to poor technique in their racket or club use. However, many other people can also develop these conditions, especially if they use their hands and wrists in twisting or repetitive activities.

The muscles of the forearm bend and straighten the wrist, and attach to the elbow via tendons. It is thought that repeated motion of the wrist causes tiny tears within these tendons, thereby causing damage and inflammation to the tendons. This leads to pain and tenderness at the elbow.

### What does the pain feel like?

The pain involved with tennis elbow or golfer's elbow is often of gradual onset, but can also come on suddenly. The pain can develop over a period of days, weeks or even months. The following symptoms are common in people with tennis elbow and golfer's elbow:



- Pain on the outside (tennis elbow), or inside (golfer's elbow) of the elbow joint
- Occasional radiating pain into the forearm
- Weakness and pain with activities such as turning a doorknob or shaking hands
- Discomfort with bending or twisting the wrist
- Stiffness or pain when straightening the elbow

### What can I do to get better more quickly?

You can assist the recovery process so that the elbow can recover on its own by:

- Resting – avoid activities which aggravate your pain
- Applying ice – an ice-pack should be wrapped in a damp towel and applied for no more than 15 minutes at a time
- Taking anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen – see your doctor or pharmacist for more advice
- Wearing a strap around your elbow – this will help to reduce movement in your elbow and relieve the strain
- Performing exercises – stretch and strengthen affected muscles to prevent a recurrence. See below for recommended exercises.

If your elbow pain does not improve within 2 weeks, you may need professional treatment to help you recover. See your doctor or physiotherapist for further advice.

Other treatments for tennis elbow include:

- Physiotherapy – a physiotherapist will perform techniques to loosen tight muscles to take the strain off the

affected tendons. They will also show you how to perform specific exercises, and advise on how to change the action that is causing your problem

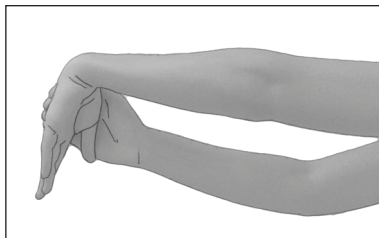
- Acupuncture – this may be an option to help you recover from your injury faster
- Steroid injection – this may be required for severe cases. Your doctor will assess you and help you decide whether this option will benefit you
- Extracorporeal Shock Wave Therapy (ESWT) - this procedure has been found to breakdown dead tissues, increase blood circulation and promote healing in the damaged tendons
- Surgery – this is the last resort when all other treatments have been unsuccessful.

### Recommended exercises for tennis elbow

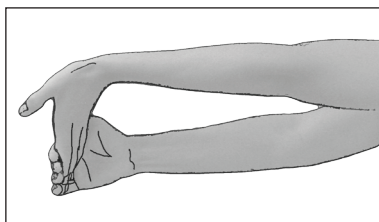
The following exercises should be performed without pain. They should be performed slowly so that you can feel your muscles controlling the movement. Being too aggressive can actually make your injury worse.

- Muscle stretch
  - » Hold your arm in front of you with your palm facing the ground (extensors)

- » Keep your elbow straight
- » Bend your wrist downward as far as it will go or at the point of pain onset

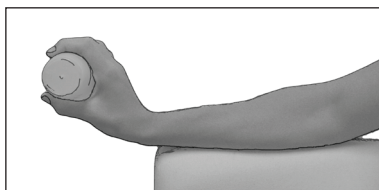


- » Hold the stretch for 20-30 seconds
- » Repeat the stretch with the palm facing the ceiling (flexors)



- Wrist extension with weight
  - » Sit with your forearm supported on a chair or table
  - » Hold a 1-2 kg weight in your hand with the palm facing toward the ground

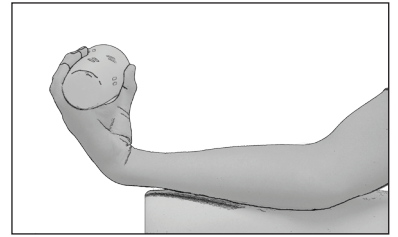
- » Bend your wrist upward slowly until your wrist stops moving
- » Slowly lower your wrist to starting position



- » Perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions

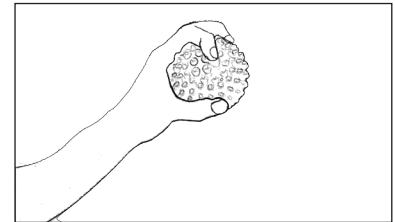
- Wrist flexion with weight

- » As per wrist extension exercise, except with your palm facing the ceiling



- Ball squeeze

- » Hold a tennis ball in your hand
- » Squeeze 25 times
- » If this reproduces your pain, try using a softer object like a stress ball



### How can tennis elbow/golfer's elbow be prevented?

- Warm up before any racket sports
- Get a professional to assess your technique
- Perform exercises to strengthen your arm and shoulder muscles
- Avoid performing one activity for long periods of time, especially if they involve repetitive wrist or arm movements
- Use the correct racket or club for your hand size to prevent excessive strain on your muscles

This information should only be used as a guide. For further reading, visit <http://mcr.coreconcepts.com.sg>

*For more information, please contact your Family Doctor*