

TENNIS ELBOW

What is it?

Tennis elbow is a common overuse injury of the elbow, affecting 1–3% of the population, especially between the ages of 40-50. Despite the title tennis elbow, tennis is a direct cause in only 5% of people with this condition.

Typical Symptoms include:

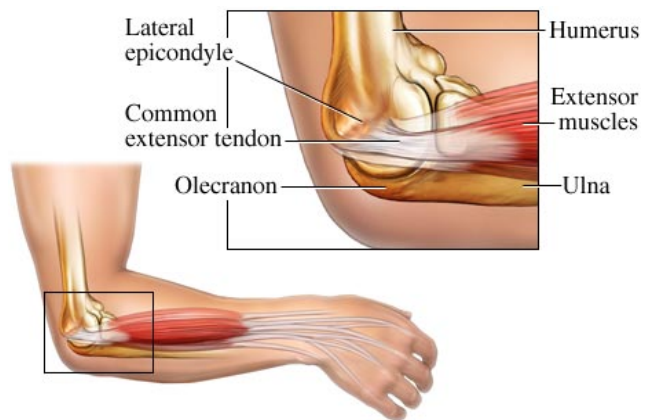
- Pain on the outer side of the elbow
- Pain aggravated by twisting / gripping movements, such as turning a door knob, or pouring a drink.
- Can be aggravated by some work activities (e.g. computer work, or physical work with hand tools
- Elbow can feel stiff and difficult to straighten.

What caused it?

We used to think that tennis elbow was caused by inflammation where the tendon joins the bone, although more recent research has shown that there aren't actually any inflammatory cells present in the area.

The pain is now thought to be due to repetitive micro-trauma to the tendon, which results in some degeneration within the tendon.

Small, repeated movements cause tiny tears to the area, similar to the way a rope becomes frayed over time. It may be difficult to pinpoint an exact event that started your symptoms, as it may be a series of smaller, repetitive actions that lead to the condition.



What do I do about it?

Tennis elbow requires intervention as soon as the symptoms appear. Early intervention usually prevents the development of a serious disorder. Identification of the original activity associated with the cause of tennis elbow is essential as damage to the arms and elbows can become chronic if the activity is not changed or discontinued.

Some cases of tennis elbow clear up with plenty of rest and support, and by avoiding activities that put more stress on the tendons. Over-the-counter painkillers can be taken to treat any mild pain. Allowing symptoms to get better without further treatment can take several weeks or months as tendons are slow to heal.

Your physiotherapist can recommend other treatments to rehabilitate your elbow. These may include exercises to specifically strengthen your forearm muscles – the stronger the muscles are, the less likely they are to become injured with future activities.

Early intervention is the key to a quick recovery; see your Premier Physiotherapist for a FREE assessment today!