

Booking a consultation

The clinic aims to be as flexible as possible offering appointments to suit individuals. Daytime and evening consultations are available depending on the day.

Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to consent for treatment.

Map



Contact Details

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TENNIS ELBOW



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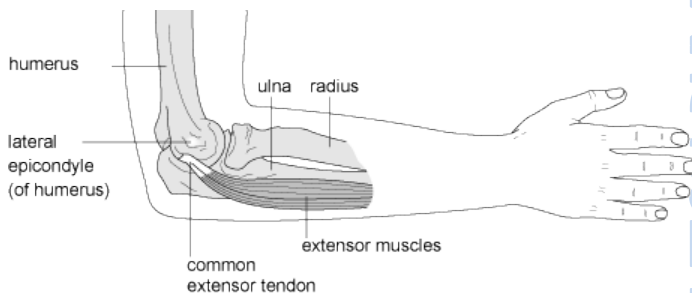
Introduction

'Tennis Elbow' is a general term describing a number of painful conditions experienced on the outside region of the elbow. A common medical term used for describing pain at the outside part of the elbow is 'lateral epicondylitis', however it is also important to consider if the source of the pain is due to a problem in another region (e.g. the neck).

The commonest cause of Tennis Elbow is damage to the tendon that joins the extensor muscles of the forearm and wrist to the humerus. This tendon is called the '**common extensor tendon**'. Tendon damage can occur after a single incident, such as lifting something very heavy, but the commonest cause is repeated overuse of the arm. Overuse causes tiny tears in the tendon. This is made worse if the activity that triggered the pain is repeated. If the tendon is continually injured the tear may become more serious, even leading to rupture.

Anatomy

The elbow is essentially a hinge joint that is formed between the humerus (upper arm) and the ulna and radius (forearm).



Common Causes of Tennis Elbow

Tennis elbow is usually provoked with activities that require repeated use of the extensor muscle of the wrist and forearm. Playing tennis three times in a week when you haven't played for some time is the sort of overuse that could cause tennis elbow, however a range of different activities that involve repeated hand, wrist and forearm movements could also be the cause. These include:

- Playing Tennis
- Using a computer mouse or keyboard
- Using scissors or shears
- Gardening
- manual occupations that involve repetitive twisting and lifting of the wrist, i.e. using a screwdriver or hammer
- Playing musical instruments such as the violin

Symptoms

- Pain usually occurs on the dominant side.
- Pain and tenderness are experienced on the outside of the elbow and sometimes in the muscles on top of the forearm.
- Symptoms usually develop gradually, are made worse with activity and may take a day or more to settle.
- Pain may become constant and interrupt sleep.
- The affected arm may feel stiff in the morning and painful when turning door handles or shaking hands.
- The arm often feels weak and heavy
- Pain or stiffness may be experienced in the rest of the arm, shoulder or neck, as a result of compensatory movements.

Treatment

Medication

Severe Tennis Elbow is predominantly an inflammatory condition, therefore a short course of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (Ibuprofen/Neurofen), can be very useful at relieving symptoms. Some doctors may even inject the affected area with a corticosteroid, which may settle down inflammation.

Ice

Localised 'Ice-Massage' to the inflamed area can be extremely useful at reducing pain and aiding the healing process. By applying a 'wet' ice cube and massaging the area for up to 5 minutes at a time the area will numb off and will be less painful. By applying an ice-massage regime 3-5 times a day, healing can be encouraged as well as pain reducing.

Relative Rest

It is important strain is reduced in the painful area, otherwise treatments can mask the pain while the condition gets worse. Individuals should rest from aggravating activities for about two weeks, allowing inflammation to settle. An elbow support can be beneficial at reducing the stress on the area, whilst allowing the user to continue with activities.

Physiotherapy

Once severe pain and disability has subsided, physiotherapy can focus at identifying and addressing the cause and preventing a recurrence. Posture, alignment, muscle balance, joint stiffness and nerve mobility can be examined and corrected as necessary. Rehabilitation exercises including stretching and strengthening can be commenced at this stage.