

Wyre Forest Health Partnership

The exercises are ordered from easier to harder - you can progress through them as you feel more comfortable to do so - increasing the repetitions or sets to the maximum on each exercise

For more information you can watch a video on the BESS website about tennis elbow

Wearing an 'epiclasp' during activity can also help

2 Sets / 10 Reps / 10 s hold

### 1. Isometric wrist extension

Start in a seated position with your forearm resting on a table and your palm facing down.

Place your other hand on the back of your affected hand.

Attempt to lift your affected wrist up, whilst resisting the movement with your good hand.

Ensure you keep your forearm in contact with the table.

Hold this position.

*Week1 to week 3/4: Start straight away. Hold the resistance for 10 seconds, rest for 10 seconds, and repeat 10 times in a row. Practice 2 x day at least 4 times a week. Progress with weights as this gets easier in few weeks time.*



3 Sets / 10 Reps

### 2. Eccentric wrist extension with weight

Start in a seated position with your forearm resting on a table and holding a weight in your hand with your palm facing downwards.

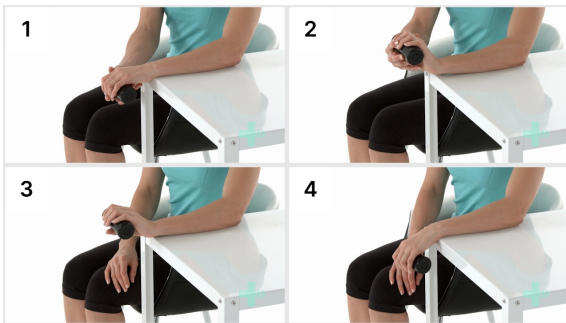
Using the other hand, lift your wrist up, keeping your forearm in contact with the table.

Remove your other hand and then slowly lower your raised hand back down without support.

Relax and repeat.

*Progression Ex: Week4 onwards - if it is still painful to lift with weight, then use other hand to help as shown here.*

*Repeat 1 x day (3-4 times a week)*



3 Sets / 8 Reps

### 3. Resisted wrist extension

Sit upright with your forearm resting on a table and your hand relaxed over the edge.

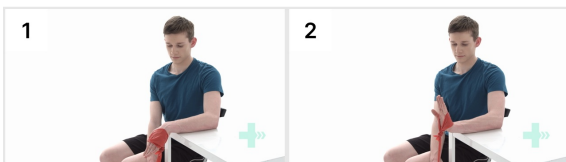
Hold one end of a tensioned resistance band in your hand with the palm facing down.

Hold the other end of the band on your lap.

Keeping your forearm on the table, lift your hand up, pulling against the resistance of the band.

Control the movement as you slowly lower your hand back down.

*Week 6 onwards - 1 x day (3 times a week)*



#### 4. Ball squeeze

Hold a ball in your hand.

Squeeze the ball as hard as you can and hold.

Allow your wrist to move in whichever direction feels natural.

*Week 3 onwards: Grip only as much as comfortable. repeat 1-2 times a day.*



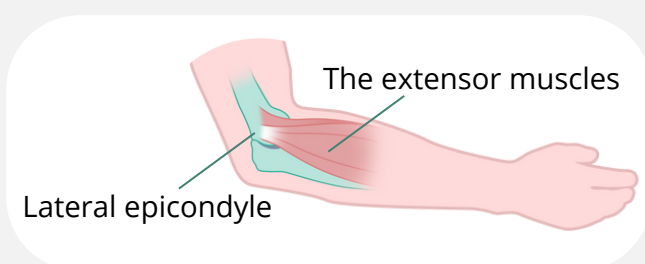
# LATERAL ELBOW PAIN

## Understanding lateral elbow tendinopathy

### Introduction

Lateral elbow tendinopathy, more commonly known as tennis elbow or lateral epicondylalgia, is an overuse injury affecting the tendons on the outside of the elbow. This condition often arises from placing excessive demand on the tendon, surpassing its capacity.

Individuals with lateral elbow pain typically experience pain and stiffness, which can temporarily lessen with gentle movement. The pain associated with lateral elbow pain typically originates from the common extensor tendon and the surrounding tissues (fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** The muscles that extend the wrist and fingers are connected to the bone on the outer side of the forearm (the lateral epicondyle) by this the common extensor tendon.

Contrary to what the name implies, tennis elbow isn't just for tennis players. Sports where athletes use a stick or a racket, such as tennis or ice hockey, may lead to a higher risk of lateral elbow pain. Similarly, occupations involving a lot of repetitive upper extremity movements, like factory work, can also be a contributing factor. It's quite common among office workers too.

Repetitive everyday tasks, such as carrying heavy bags or hammering, can irritate the elbow. Additionally, activities like opening jars, doors, and typing can be challenging for those with tennis elbow.

## **Active self-management is often the key**

The management of tennis elbow doesn't differ much from that of other tendon issues. Initial management strategies usually involve reducing tendon load, followed by gradually increasing load tolerance and strength. For individuals with lateral elbow pain, early management is crucial in reducing the risk of persistent symptoms. Therefore, recognizing the early signs, such as pain on the outside of the elbow during activities or at rest, is important.

There is a significant difference in management depending on how long the symptoms have been present. In the early stages, the focus should be more on reducing the load and easing the symptoms. If the symptoms have persisted for a couple of months or more, then the main emphasis should be on strengthening the muscles and gradually increasing the load. With perseverance, your symptoms should gradually decrease in intensity over time. This process can take anywhere from a week to a month, depending on the severity of your tendon pain and its duration.

### **1. Reducing the load (early management)**

First and foremost, it's crucial to reduce activities that irritate your tendon. If too much stress continues to be applied to the tissues, the tendon will become increasingly irritated. Therefore, look for ways to modify your everyday tasks, such as opening a jar with your other hand while using a cloth, or carrying your shopping on your forearm or using a backpack. However, also note that excessive rest can actually hinder the healing process in the long run.

If work activities aggravate your pain, consider discussing changes to your workstation setup with your employer. This is particularly important if your job involves repetitive hand movements or the use of force. Health care practitioners, for example physiotherapists, can offer tips on managing the load on your hand during work. In addition, adding small and light movements at regular intervals can often significantly improve your tolerance to the workload.

### **Box 1. Practical tips you can try to ease your symptoms**

**Heat** - Place a hot water bottle over your forearm to reduce the feeling of stiffness, especially when the tendon hasn't been used for a while. It's best to use a layer of clothing or fabric between the bottle and your skin for safety.

**Massage** - Gentle massage around the tendon to improve circulatory flow can be helpful for some individuals. Start with light pressure, then gradually increase as the tissues warm up. Once warmed, apply more pressure, rubbing across the tendon. Topical non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can be used alone or in combination with these massage techniques.

**Elbow Orthoses** - Various supports are available for tennis elbow. While some may be suitable for individuals whose symptoms are easily provoked, they should primarily be worn only during activities that trigger symptoms, serving as a supplementary treatment.

## **2. Strengthen and increase the tolerance to load**

Although in the early stages treating tennis elbow involves managing symptoms and temporarily reducing aggravating activities, it's also important to understand that, in the long run, strengthening the muscles of the forearm and upper extremity is essential. This strengthening is necessary to handle the load of everyday work and repetitive hand functions. Your health care practitioner can guide you through the specific exercises suitable for you and your needs.