

## Stretching Exercises

Stretch your forearm extensor muscles in the positions below, beginning with your elbow bent. When the pain is tolerable, add a gentle stretch with the opposite hand.

Position 1



Position 2



Once the stretch is tolerable with your elbow bent, carefully extend your elbow to perform the forearm stretches. Again, add a stretch with the opposite hand when your pain has decreased.

Position 3



Position 4



Hold each forearm stretch for a count of 5

Do \_\_\_ repetitions \_\_\_ times per day.

**Note:** If nonsurgical forms of treatment do not eliminate the pain of this condition, surgery may be recommended. Your orthopedic surgeon can advise you on the surgical treatments for lateral epicondylitis and the possible outcomes. Lateral epicondylitis is often a nagging or chronic condition that sometimes requires many months for healing to occur.

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Irwin Army Community Hospital

Fort Riley, KS 66442

Occupational Therapy Clinic

Patient Information Handout

# LATERAL EPICONDYLITIS

“TENNIS ELBOW”



*Irwin Army Community Hospital*

*Occupational Therapy Service*

*(785) 239-7863*

*Consult Required*



## LATERAL EPICONDYLITIS

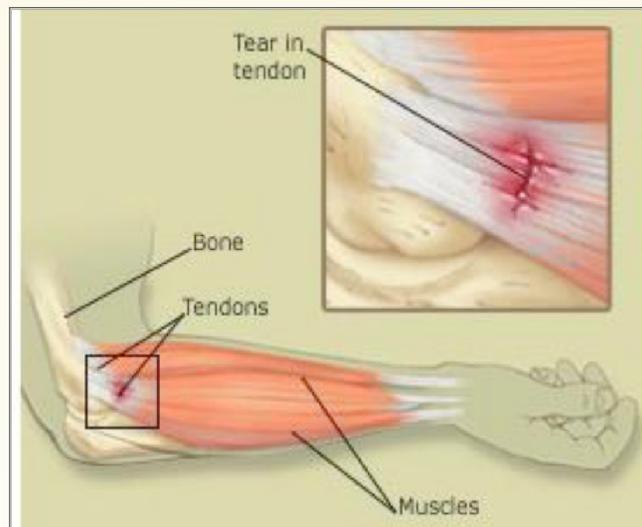
What is it?

Lateral epicondylitis, commonly known as “tennis elbow,” is an inflammation of the tendon fibers that attach the forearm extensor muscles to the outside of the elbow. These muscles lift the wrist and hand. Pain may be felt where these fibers attach to the bone on the outside of the elbow along the muscles in the forearm. Pain is usually more noticeable during or after stressful use of the arm. In severe cases, lifting and grasping even light objects may be painful. Because people who play tennis or other racquet sports sometimes develop this problem from improper playing technique, it has become known as “tennis elbow.”



## WHAT CAUSES LATERAL EPICONDYLITIS?

Routine use of the arm or an injury to this area may stress or damage the muscle attachment and cause tennis elbow symptoms. Bending the wrist back (extension), turning the hand palm side up, and lifting the object with the elbow straight are the more common activities that affect these tendons. This condition is quite common in our late 30s and early 40s.



## What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include tenderness and pain at the lateral epicondyle. This area is usually tender when touched and may be uncomfortable when gripping. In severe cases, almost any elbow movement can be uncomfortable.

## TREATMENT

1. **Splint** the wrist extended 25-30 degrees. Splint is to be used day and night. A counterforce strap or “tennis elbow” strap is worn to reduce stress on the common extensor tendon may be recommended.



2. Perform **transfiber massage**, a gentle massage of the forearm over the site of pain, across the “grain of tissue.”
3. **Wrist and forearm stretching** exercises followed by gentle active range of motion exercises.
4. **Ice massage** is used in a circular motion following exercise routine to reduce potential swelling.



Perform \_\_\_\_\_ times per day.

5. **Activity modification** is recommended. Perform all lifting activities with both hands and with palms up to decrease the stress on the lateral epicondyle.