

Golfer's Elbow

Service User Information Leaflet

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Produced by Fife Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service

What is golfer's elbow?

Golfer's elbow is caused by overuse or degeneration of the tendon on the inner side of the elbow. It is usually painful over the bump on the inner side of the elbow (medial epicondyle). Golfer's elbow can occur in golf and throwing sports. It is more common in non-sporting people. Men and women are equally affected.

What causes golfer's elbow?

It is caused by using a repetitive strong grip during lifting activities or sports. The muscles that bend the wrist towards the palm of the hand (flexor muscles of the forearm) are joined to the elbow. Strong use of these muscles can cause strain at the elbow. This is the point where the tendons join to the bone on the inner side of the forearm.

What are the symptoms of golfer's elbow?

The patient will experience pain and tenderness over the inner side of the elbow. This may follow a period of activity. This will get easier after a period of rest. In more severe cases the hand can feel weak causing difficulty in some tasks.

How is golfer's elbow diagnosed?

To find golfer's elbow, your doctor or physiotherapist will look at the affected arm. Your doctor or physiotherapist will check the area around the elbow by pressing on it. They will also bend the hand upwards against pressure to see if this causes pain.

How is golfer's elbow treated?

- **Changing activities that bring on your pain.** Alter activities that bring on pain. This is to reduce inflammation so that the tendon injury can heal. Changing job activities and cutting out repeated movements of the hand is necessary.
- **Cold therapy** - Apply ice packs or frozen peas wrapped in a towel over the painful area for 10 minutes. Repeat this 3 to 4 times a day for the first few days.
- **Anti-inflammatory and other pain medications** - Please tell your pharmacist about any other drugs you are using. Ask whether they might be affected by the new drug.
- **Steroid injection** – in a small number of individuals a steroid injection may help in easing pain in the short-term.
- **Physiotherapy** - A physiotherapist can teach you to do gentle stretching and gradual muscle strengthening exercises.

Surgery is rarely used is used for this condition.

Can golfer's elbow be stopped from happening?

The best way to stop golfer's elbow is to stop over using the tendons at the elbow.

The following may help;

- Stop the activity that is causing your pain or find a different way of doing it.
- Try to get some professional advice about your technique if you play a sport that uses repeated movements. This is so that you do not strain your elbow.
- Warm up and gently stretch the muscles before playing sport.
- Increasing the strength of your forearm muscles can help to stop golfer's elbow.

Wrist Stretching

Hold your affected arm with your elbow straight and palm facing down. Push the back of your hand towards you until a gentle stretch is felt on the inside of your forearm. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds. Repeat 3 times, 3 times a day (Figure 1).

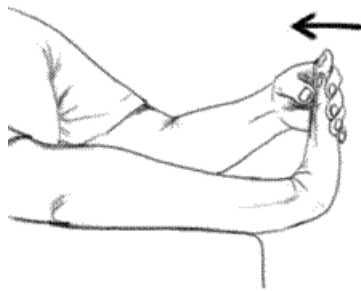


Figure 1: Wrist Stretch

For Further Advice:

www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/muscle-bone-and-joints