

Dealing with Tennis Elbow

TIPS FROM ORGANIZATIONAL SOLUTIONS

The right care, at the right time, for the right outcome.™



Tennis elbow is an overuse injury that occurs when tendons (tissues that attach muscles to bones) become overloaded, leading to inflammation, degeneration and potential tearing.

People in certain professions are also more prone to tennis elbow: assembly line workers and auto mechanics, butchers and chefs, carpenters, cleaners, painters, plumbers, dentists, gardeners, landscapers, manicurists, and musicians.



SYMPTOMS OF TENNIS ELBOW

Tennis elbow is usually the result of overuse. Symptoms tend to come on slowly. Pain may get worse over weeks and months. Signs of tennis elbow include:

- **Burning or pain on your outer elbow** that may travel to your wrist (these sensations may get worse at night).
- **Pain when twisting or bending your arm** (for instance, to turn a doorknob or open a jar).
- **Stiffness or pain** when extending your arm.
- **Swollen elbow joint** that's tender to touch.
- **Weakened grip** when you try to hold items like a racquet, wrench, pen or someone's hand.

HOW CAN I PREVENT TENNIS ELBOW?

These steps can help you avoid tennis elbow:

- Don't push through pain. Pain is your body's way of talking to you, and you need to listen. Pushing through pain can lead to damage to your tendon and potential tearing.
- Check equipment for proper fit. For example, stiff or loose-strung racquets may reduce stress on your forearm.
- Lift weights to strengthen forearms and wrist muscles.
- Stretch wrists and arms before starting work or an activity.
- Wear an elbow brace to keep symptoms from worsening.

WHAT CAUSES TENNIS ELBOW?

Repetitive arm movements can cause your forearm muscles to get fatigued. A single tendon attaches this muscle to the bony bump on the outside of your elbow (lateral epicondyle). As your muscle gets tired, the tendon takes more of the load. This overloading can cause inflammation and pain, known as tendinitis. Sometimes, a sudden arm or elbow injury causes tennis elbow.

NONSURGICAL TREATMENT INCLUDES

- Rest
- [ice](#)
- [NSAIDs](#) (such as [Advil](#))
- exercise
- [ultrasound](#)
- [bracing/compression](#)
- steroid injections

ADVOCATE – ASK A DOCTOR

- Why did I get tennis elbow?
- What is the best treatment for tennis elbow?
- What changes should I make to manage symptoms?
- What changes should I make to prevent the problem from happening again?
- Should I watch for signs of complications?

NOTE: Anyone who does activities or a job that requires repetitive arm motions (extending and bending) can get tennis elbow. See your healthcare provider if bending and straightening your arm causes pain or your outer elbow is tender to touch. Your provider can offer suggestions to reduce pain and inflammation. Rarely, people with tennis elbow need surgery. With proper treatment, you can safely