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Please contact either:

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Tel: 0800 011 6113
10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday
Messages can be left outside these hours.
Email: pals.hchs@nhs.net

Patient Experience Team
Tel: 01707 388036
9:30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday
Messages can be left outside these hours
Email: complaints.hchs@nhs.net

Tennis Elbow
Self-Management Information for Patients

This leaflet has been produced by staff working in our Outpatient Physiotherapy teams, part of our Musculoskeletal Service

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About Tennis Elbow

A tendon attaches muscle to bone. Tennis Elbow concerns the tendon that attaches your forearm muscles to your elbow bone. It is commonly caused by overuse or a sudden increase in activity. As tendons do not have a good blood supply their healing is slow.

Gradual loading helps to increase blood flow which aids recovery. It can be very tender to touch but this is rarely a sign of anything serious.

Treatment

If your elbow pain has started within the last week, it is advisable to follow PRICE:

- Protection
- Rest
- Ice
- Compression
- Elevation

You may find the use of a clasp around the painful area helpful — these can be bought in most chemists.

If your elbow pain has lasted more than 5 days you may find heat beneficial and may need advice from your local pharmacist for over-the-counter pain medication, creams or gels.

Massaging the painful area can help. This can be done with a moisturising cream, gel or ice but make sure you take precautions to protect your skin from irritation or ice burn.

Suggested Exercises:

Stage 1:

Wrist Extensor Stretch
With elbow straight, bend wrist down using other hand. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 times.

Stage 2:

Isometric Wrist Extension
Rest forearm on table. Try to lift hand up, resisting with your good hand. Hold for 10 seconds and repeat 5 times.

Active Through Range Flexion/Extension Over Table
Rest forearm on table. Relax wrist. Lift hand up as far as you can and then slowly lower back down. Repeat 10 times, 3 sets.

Through Range Wrist Flexion/Extension with Weight or Resistance Over Table
Rest forearm on table with a small weight in your hand. Starting with wrist down, raise hand up and slowly lower to start position. Repeat 10 times, do 3 sets.

It is important to try to stay as active as your pain allows. Too much rest doesn’t help the tendon heal and can prolong recovery in the long-term. Gradual progression of activity and exercise is the best way to help your tendon recover.

If your symptoms worsen or persist after completing these exercises for 8 weeks, then please seek further medical advice from your GP.