



United States Military Academy
Sports Medicine-Physical Therapy Services
Keller Army Community Hospital and Arvin Gym, West Point, New York
"Academic, Research, and Clinical Excellence"

Epicondylitis

Epicondylitis may occur at the Medial (inside) or Lateral (outside) portion of the elbow. Medial epicondylitis is often referred to as "Golfer's Elbow" and lateral Epicondylitis is often referred to as "Tennis Elbow". Muscles that extend the wrist/fingers attach to the lateral elbow while those that flex the wrist/fingers attach to the medial elbow.

Symptoms

The primary symptom of epicondylitis is point tenderness to the medial or lateral portion of the elbow. Repetitive muscle actions and heavy lifting may increase the pain. Pain often radiates from the elbow down to the forearm. Racquet sports may increase the symptoms of lateral epicondylitis while activities such as golf often increase the symptoms of medial epicondylitis.



Causes

Epicondylitis is usually an overuse injury that can be exacerbated by the following:

1. Repetitive use of the elbow or wrist without adequate rest
 - a. Due to occupational demands (carpentry, computer work, machinist, etc)
 - b. Due to recreational activity (knitting, tennis, golf, etc)
2. Tightness of the wrist and elbow muscles
3. Weakness of the wrist and elbow muscles

Treatment

1. Relative Rest: If possible, avoid activities that aggravate your symptoms
2. Control Inflammation:
 - a. Ice Massage - Perform 2-3 times per day. Freeze water in Styrofoam or paper cup, peel away cup and apply directly to the area of pain. Keep ice cup moving at all times. Apply Ice Massage for 7-10 minutes.
 - b. Medication - non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication may be prescribed.
3. A forearm support band may be prescribed to decrease the pull of the muscles on the elbow.
4. Stretch Tight Muscles: Your Physical Therapist will evaluate your flexibility and recommend appropriate exercises to improve your flexibility
5. Strengthen Weak Muscles: Your Physical Therapist will evaluate your strength and muscle balance and recommend appropriate exercises to improve your strength if necessary
6. Other physical therapy modalities may be utilized if necessary
7. Injections are occasionally effective in reducing inflammation

- **Based off of the findings of your exam your physical therapist will help you develop a well-balanced treatment plan that meets your specific needs.**