



FITforeGOLF™

Better Golf through Better Health

Education Series

ELBOW PAIN IN GOLF

Causes and Cures

Understanding how to manage and prevent golf related elbow injuries.

www.fitforegolf.com

FITforeGOLF™

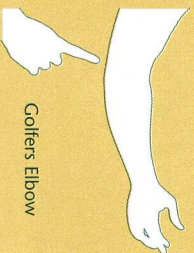
ELBOW PAIN IN GOLF

About this Booklet

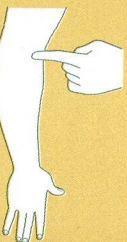
The purpose of this brochure is to educate golfers on how to avoid golf-related elbow injuries. The brochure is divided into 2 parts. The first explains the main injuries that can occur to the elbow and how the golf swing creates stress on these structures. This is followed by a special "What can I do?" section that includes technique advice as well as important exercises for improving the strength and flexibility of the elbow muscles and joints.

ELBOW INJURIES

There are two common golf injuries affecting the elbow area: Golfers elbow (medial epicondylitis) and Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis). These conditions can result from poor technique or over-use (playing or practicing too often). Recreational golfers between the ages of 35 to 55 years are especially susceptible to these injuries.



Golfers Elbow



Tennis Elbow

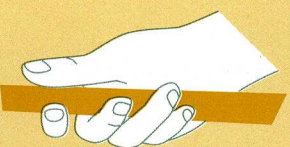
GOLFERS ELBOW

Elbow injury amongst golfers is so common that the term golfers elbow is an established medical condition. It relates to pain on the bony prominence on the inside of the elbow (medial epicondyle). The medial epicondyle is the attachment site for all the muscles which flex the wrist and fingers. Golfers elbow usually occurs in the trailing elbow (i.e. the right elbow of a right-handed player).

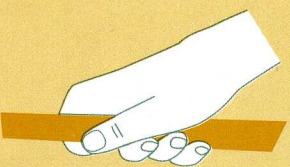
How does Golfers Elbow occur?

Golfers elbow typically occurs from over-use rather than during one specific swing. Taking deep divots or hitting directly off the mat at a driving range increases the risk of developing Golfers elbow.

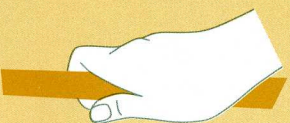
Gripping the club with a strong bottom (right) hand can also be a contributing factor as it places greater stress on the inside of the elbow during impact.



Strong grip



Neutral grip



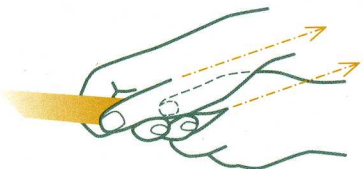
Weak grip

1 HELP THE ELBOW HEAL

- Consult your physician or physical therapist if the pain is intense or prolonged.
- Avoid movements that make you grimace (this may require you to temporarily stop golfing).
- Ice the elbow regularly and for 15 minutes at a time. ALWAYS use a moist towel between your skin and the ice.
- Stretch the forearm muscles **several times per day**. (See attached exercises).
- Anti-inflammatory medication and physical therapy treatment may help speed the healing process.
- An elbow brace may be necessary to allow you to return to golf without pain. Ask your physician or physical therapist.
- Start back at golf gradually (give yourself several days off between rounds).
- Warm up properly before hitting balls (see **STRETCH Your Golf Game** booklet).
- Continue to stretch your forearm muscles **during** each round and practice session.
- Avoid hitting off driving range mats and try not to swing as hard when playing (i.e. use an extra club to hit your normal yardage).

2 ADJUST YOUR TECHNIQUE

A neutral grip is extremely important for preventing elbow injuries. A neutral grip means the knuckles of the index and middle fingers of the top (left) hand and index finger of the bottom (right) hand are visible to the eyes when gripping the club at address. When the hands are placed in this manner, the line formed between the thumb and index finger of both hands will point somewhere near the nipple region of the trail side.



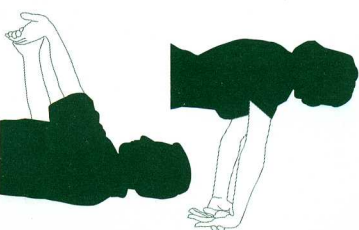
Light grip pressure is also very important for preventing elbow injuries. Recreational golfers typically grip with more force than elite professional players. Remember: *Light Is Right!* Washing your grips regularly with soap and water and replacing grips that are worn and slippery can help reduce grip pressure. A lesson from a PGA instructor may be necessary to check grip placement and pressure.

3 STRETCH & STRENGTHEN YOUR FOREARM MUSCLES

- Wrist stretching and strengthening are extremely important for preventing and treating elbow problems.
- Consult your physician or physical therapist about these and other elbow rehabilitation exercises.
- STOP if these exercises cause pain.
- Exercise tubing may be purchased from your local **FITforeGOLF™** facility.
- Make sure your back and shoulder muscles are also strong and flexible

4 ELBOW STRETCHES

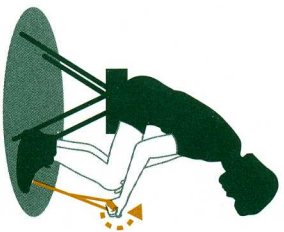
Start with your arm straight out in front of you and the palm facing downwards. Make a gentle fist and slowly pull your wrist under with your other hand. Do not let your shoulder rise up as you do this. A comfortable stretch should be felt on the outside of your forearm. Now turn your arm so the palm is facing up. Gently pull your fingers back with your other hand. A stretch should be felt on the inside of your forearm. Hold both stretches for 15 seconds.



5

GOLFERS ELBOW STRENGTHENING

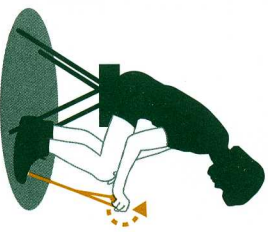
Sit and rest the outside of your forearm on the top of your thigh. The palm will be facing up. While holding a light weight (e.g. soup can) or rubber tubing, SLOWLY curl your wrist up as far as possible. Keep your forearm in contact with your thigh the whole time. Perform 2-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions. Fatigue should be felt in the front of your wrist and inside of your forearm.



6

TENNIS ELBOW STRENGTHENING

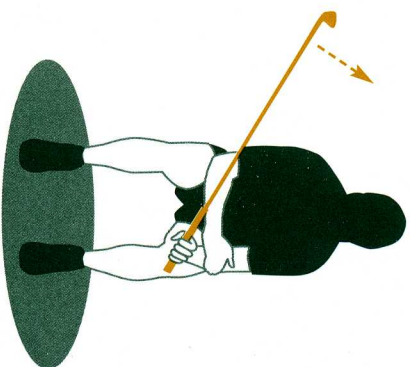
While seated, rest the inside of your forearm on the top of your thigh. The palm will be facing down. While holding a light weight (e.g. soup can) or rubber tubing, SLOWLY curl your wrist up as far as possible. Keep your forearm in contact with your thigh the whole time. Do 2-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions on each wrist.



7

PRONATION & SUPINATION EXERCISE

Sit and rest the inside of your forearm on top of your thigh. Without letting your elbow or upper arm move, slowly twist the club from side to side. The club should move in a vertical plane as you rotate your forearm from side to side. Attaching a light weight, such as the **FITforGOLF™ Swing Weight**, onto the end of the club will make the exercise harder. Fatigue should be felt in the wrist and forearm regions. Increase the speed of the exercise as you get stronger.



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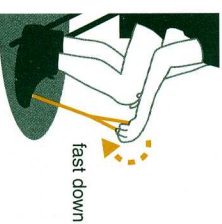
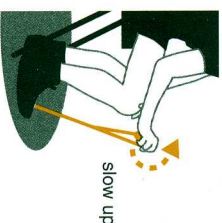
ADVANCED STRENGTHENING

Consult with your physician or physical therapist before attempting these advanced strengthening exercises.

Eccentric Strengthening

Research has shown that eccentric strengthening is particularly effective for rehabilitating elbow problems. Eccentric means most of the stress associated with the exercise occurs as the muscle tries to decelerate or stop the movement.

The set-up for eccentric strengthening is the same as outlined for the Golfers elbow (palm up) and Tennis elbow (palm down) strengthening exercises. The only difference is instead of slowly curling the wrist up and down, the wrist is SLOWLY curled up then QUICKLY snapped back down. Do 2-3 sets of 10-20 repetitions. Wrist stretching should be performed between sets.



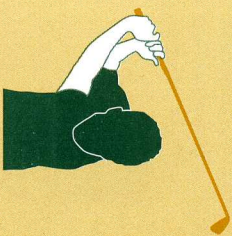
Eccentric Tennis elbow exercise

TENNIS ELBOW

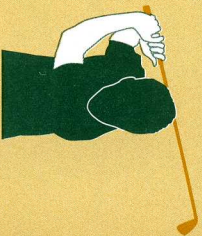
Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis), is also very common amongst golfers. In fact, Tennis elbow occurs about 5 times more often amongst golfers than Golfers elbow. Tennis elbow refers to pain on the bony bump on the outside of the elbow. All the muscles which extend the wrist and fingers back, insert at this part of the elbow. Both elbows are susceptible to Tennis elbow although it is more common on the leading arm (left elbow of a right-handed player).

How does Tennis Elbow occur?

Similar to Golfers elbow, Tennis elbow is an over-use injury often caused by taking deep divots or hitting directly off a driving range mat. Another mechanism is excessive bending of the lead (left) elbow during the take-away. This increases elbow stress by forcing the joint to violently straighten at impact.



Proper technique



Improper technique

Excessive bending of the lead elbow on the backswing can cause Tennis elbow

Why won't the pain go away?

Elbow injuries (especially Tennis elbow) are very common even in people who don't golf. This means many golfers will develop elbow problems from non-golfing activities (e.g. carrying groceries, hammering nails). In these situations, it usually occurs on the dominant side (right elbow of a right-handed person).

In both Golfers elbow and Tennis elbow conditions, the problem usually results from over-use of the wrist and forearm muscles. Poor technique can play a role by causing these muscles to work harder than necessary. Over-use can also occur in someone with good technique who simply practices or plays more than their body is able to tolerate. The result is a series of mini-injuries or micro-tears where the muscles attach to the bony areas around the elbow joint. As the golfer continues to play, the micro-tears are not able to heal properly resulting in a build-up of scar tissue. The scar tissue gradually traps very small and highly sensitive nerve fibres causing persistent pain. It is not unusual for symptoms to last several years if left untreated.

The following pages show you what you can do to relieve your elbow pain.

Amongst golfers, Tennis elbow is 5 times more common than Golfers elbow.

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FTYforeGOLF™ delivers a multifaceted program designed to help keep you injury free and add years to your game. *The better the body the better the performance!*

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