

What is Tennis Elbow?

Tennis elbow causes pain on the outer side of your elbow. The medical term for tennis elbow is lateral epicondylitis. This is because the pain is felt around the area of the lateral epicondyle (the lower, outer, bumpy part of your bone in your upper arm).

For most people with tennis elbow, the pain only occurs when they use their forearm and wrist, particularly for twisting movements such as turning a door handle or opening a jar. However, for some people the pain is constant; it occurs at rest and can affect their sleep. The pain may travel down your arm from your elbow towards your wrist. You may find it difficult to hold items such as a knife or fork, a cup or a pen, or to straighten your arm fully. Some people also notice a stiffness in the affected arm.

Causes

Tennis elbow is often an overuse injury. It occurs when the muscles and tendons in your forearm are strained due to a repetitive or strenuous activity. Tennis elbow can also sometimes occur after banging or knocking your elbow. If the muscles and tendons in your forearm are strained, tiny tears and inflammation can develop near the bony lump (lateral epicondyle) on the outside of your elbow. You may get tennis elbow if your forearm muscles are not used to doing a certain activity, such as gardening or decorating. However, even if you use your forearm muscles frequently, you can still injure them.

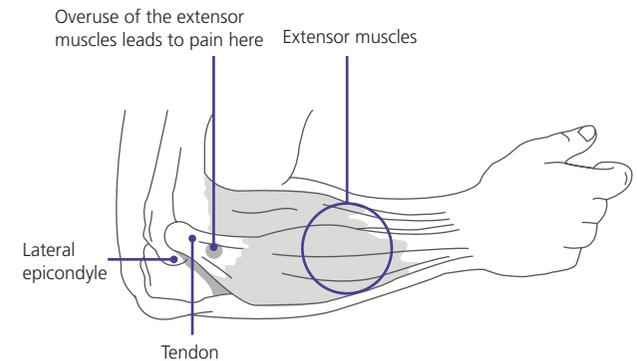
Self care advice

There are some measures you can take to help prevent tennis elbow developing or recurring:

- If you have tennis elbow, stop doing the activity that is causing pain, or find an alternative way of doing it that does not place stress on your elbow.
- Avoid using your wrist and elbow more than the rest of your arm. Spread the load to the larger muscles of your shoulder and upper arm.
- If you play a sport that involves repetitive movements, such as tennis or squash, getting some

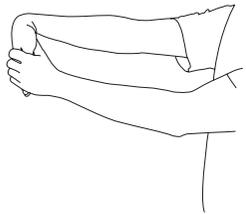
coaching advice to help improve your technique may help you avoid getting tennis elbow.

- Before doing activity that involves repetitive arm movements, warm up properly and gently stretch your arm muscles to help avoid injury.
- Use lightweight tools or racquets and enlarge their grip size to help you avoid putting excess strain on your tendons.
- Wear a tennis elbow splint when you are using your arm, and take it off while you are resting or sleeping to help prevent further damage to your tendons.
- Increasing the strength of your forearm muscles can help prevent tennis elbow.



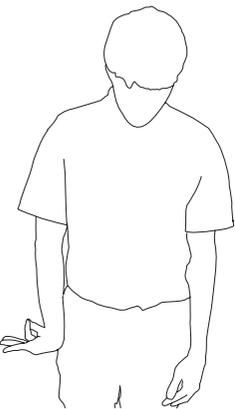
Exercises for Tennis Elbow

This programme needs to be completed for at least three months



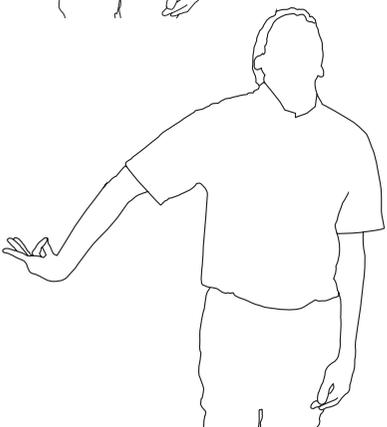
1. Wrist flexion stretch

As shown in the picture to the left. Palm facing towards the floor. Keep your elbow straight. Slowly use your other hand to stretch your wrist into flexion. You should feel a stretch in the muscle bulk in your forearm. Hold for 20 seconds and repeat 3 times.

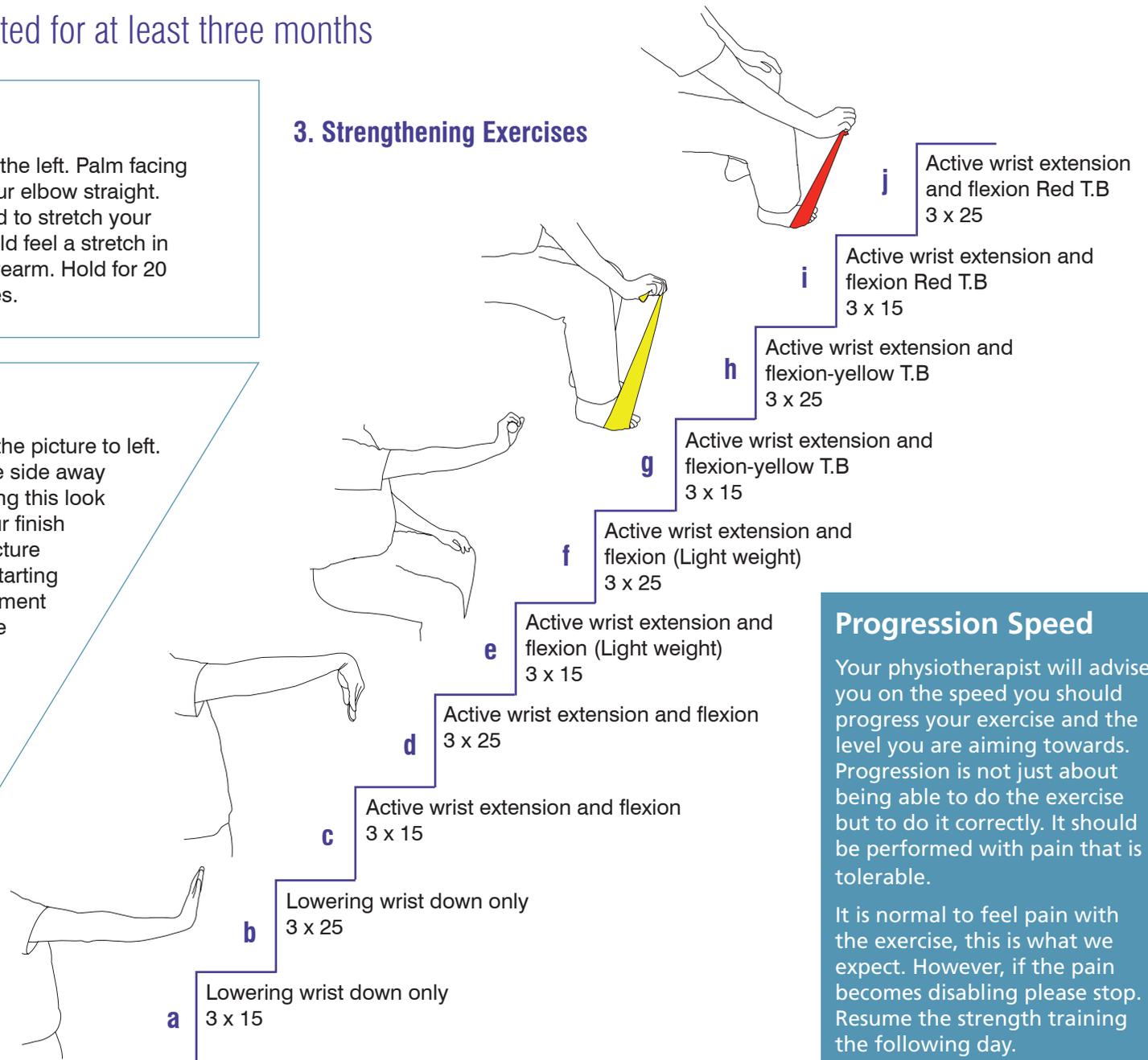


2. Radial nerve slider

Adopt the start position in the picture to left. Slowly take your arm to the side away from your body. Whilst doing this look up towards the ceiling. Your finish position is shown in the picture bottom left. Return to the starting position. Repeat this movement 20-30 times do not hold the stretch.



3. Strengthening Exercises



Progression Speed

Your physiotherapist will advise you on the speed you should progress your exercise and the level you are aiming towards. Progression is not just about being able to do the exercise but to do it correctly. It should be performed with pain that is tolerable.

It is normal to feel pain with the exercise, this is what we expect. However, if the pain becomes disabling please stop. Resume the strength training the following day.