

# Tennis Elbow

## Information for Patients



**This leaflet has been written to give you the right information about tennis elbow and what you can do to help with your recovery.**

### What is tennis elbow?

Firstly, tennis elbow is not a dangerous issue and often has nothing to do with the game of tennis. It normally relates to pain around the outside of the elbow.

Tennis elbow relates to an irritation of the tendon (which attaches muscle to bone) in the back of your forearm as it meets the elbow.

### What causes tennis elbow?

In most cases, either doing more of something (painting or lifting), doing something new or different (new job or hobby) or simply doing less and then getting back into activity (e.g. heavy gardening in the spring after doing less in the winter) can be enough to cause an irritation.

### What are the common symptoms?

**Pain:** Tennis elbow will typically cause discomfort around the outside of the elbow, but this may travel to the forearm for some people. Discomfort is often noticed when gripping, lifting or twisting (opening door handles etc.).

**Arm feeling weak:** Pain is very good at getting in the way of things. With an uncomfortable elbow it might be very difficult to do normal things like lifting a bag or a cup of tea.

### What can I do to help myself?

**Calm it down:** At the moment, there will be things your elbow likes to do and some things that it is less happy to do. Calming it down simply means looking at the things it doesn't like and trying to make some adjustments or changes to make it easier for yourself. For example, you might find that reaching out for something or lifting something like your kettle might be sore. By reaching with your hand facing up as opposed to down, or only filling the kettle half full to make it lighter, might be easy ways to keep your elbow calmer whilst it is unhappy.

**Build it back up again:** Movement is medicine for your elbow. Calming the issue down (as described above) is often the best place to start and sometimes this might take a few weeks to help. Once your elbow feels a little calmer, it is a good idea to start to 'build it back up again'. What this means is that once the elbow is able to tolerate some gentle exercise, then it is worth starting some.

### Will it get better?

For most people, tennis elbow will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. It is difficult to predict how long or how smooth or how full your recovery might be, but by understanding the issue as best you can and by adjusting what is sore to then allow you to explore some exercise/s, is often the best formula for success.

If you would like to know more about tennis elbow or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

**Search online: [Norfolk and Waveney MSK services](#) 'tennis elbow'**

# Exercises



Sit with your hand over the edge of a table or your lap with your palm facing down. Keeping your wrist still, gently push down on the hand using just one finger of your other hand. The amount of pressure (amount of fingers) or the position of your wrist or even allowing your wrist to move slowly can vary the challenge.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



When the first exercise becomes too easy, try this more advanced one.

Sit with a table in front of your or with your hand over your lap. Holding onto a weight with your palm facing down, pull your wrist back towards you and slowly lower.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



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