

Elbow Pain

Information for Patients



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

Why does my elbow hurt?

Elbow problems are common. It can sometimes be concerning if it is very sore, but it is rarely because of anything serious. Discomfort usually comes from irritated tissues such as tendons or muscles. Sometimes the pain may travel into the rest of the arm, making gripping and lifting difficult.

What causes elbow pain?

Most elbow problems are things that develop with no obvious cause. In some cases, a change in activity can contribute to an elbow issue e.g. using your arm for a long time (decorating), starting a new job or doing more physical work (lifting/carrying) than might be normal for you.

What are the common symptoms?

Pain: As in the name, elbow pain will likely cause discomfort in and around the elbow itself, however, in some cases it may travel to the forearm or the upper arm.

Stiffness: Your elbow may feel stiff or tight. This is likely to be linked to increased muscular work around the sore area as it deals with the recovery of your issue.

Noises: Clicks, pops, clunks and grinds are very normal in all joints, including your elbow, and in most cases are nothing to worry about.

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. 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.

Get your elbow moving: Movement is medicine for your body. Any movement is good movement, even if it is sore. However, if something is really painful then working around that movement is sensible.

Your elbow is strong and that won't have changed since your symptoms started. Although it is sore, it remains robust and moving your arm as early as you can, can help improve your chances of a better overall outcome.

Will it get better?

For most people, elbow pain will not be a pleasant experience but reassuringly, it does have the potential to get better. Understanding the issue as best you can and 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 elbow pain or find a greater choice of exercises, you can explore our dedicated webpage.

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

Exercises



Sit with your hand over the edge of a table or your lap with your palm facing up. 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.



Whilst sitting or standing, bend and straighten your elbow.

Complete little and often throughout the day.



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