

Lateral Epicondylalgia (tennis elbow)

In a nutshell...



What is it?

Lateral epicondylalgia is caused by irritation of a tendon on the outside of the elbow that assists with wrist movement and gripping. Commonly there is pain on the bony tip of the elbow, which can radiate into the forearm.

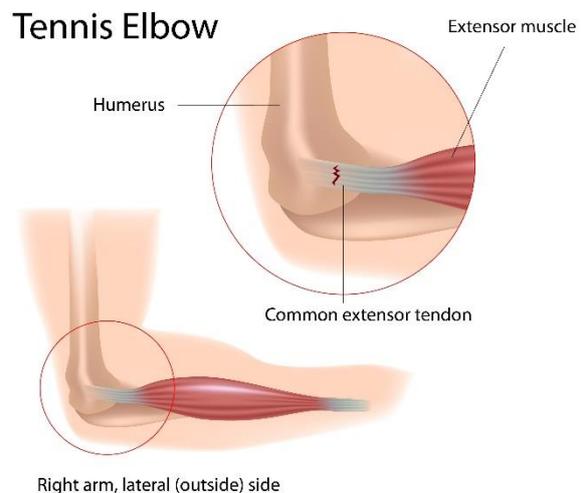
Who gets it and how?

It is most commonly a result of repetitive overuse of the wrist and forearm muscles during gripping activities.

It can also be caused by a direct blow to the outside of the elbow

How long will it take to go away?

Lateral epicondylalgia is notoriously slow to recover. It makes an enormous difference to seek help early after the onset of symptoms. On average, we see these patients weekly for 4-8 weeks, with ongoing home exercises and occasional physio sessions continuing for several months.



What can I do about it?

1. Education

If you understand the underlying anatomy and pathology you have a much greater chance of successfully managing Lateral Epicondylalgia.

2. Avoid ongoing aggravation

Modifying aggravating activities, and discuss with your physiotherapist whether you should be using a tennis elbow strap or a wrist splint. In severe cases we find a custom-made thermoplastic wrist splint can be helpful in the early stages.

3. Graduated exercises

Research indicates that long term recovery depends on gradually rebuilding the ability of the muscle and tendon to lift heavy loads. Some types of loading exercise have also been shown to give short term pain relief.

4. Graduated re-introduction of movement and activity

Talk to your physiotherapist for guidance on how to get back to the work duties, sports, and daily tasks that are currently painful for you.