

TENNIS ELBOW

Commonly known as 'Tennis Elbow' extensor tendinopathy refers to inflammation and damage of the tendons on the outside of the elbow. However, playing tennis is not a requirement for this condition!

Repetitive use of the forearm muscles during sport or with manual work can result in excessive loading and pulling of these tendons on the bone. In turn microscopic tearing can occur within the tendons causing pain and leaving them weak and vulnerable to further damage. If the repetitive loading continues, further microscopic tearing occurs and the tendons enter a degenerative and damaged state.



Symptoms

Extensor tendinopathy usually results in pain felt on the outside of the elbow and forearm. Typically the pain develops gradually and is often ignored initially because it is only present for short periods with certain activities. It tends to be associated with activities involving repetitive gripping or resisted wrist extension (e.g. laying bricks, using screwdriver, knitting, typing). As the degeneration process accelerates, pain becomes more persistent, weakness can develop, and normal function is eventually impaired.

Management

Extensor tendinopathy generally does not get better on its own if the causes are not addressed. Basic physiotherapy management usually includes:

- Activity modification
- Icing
- Stretching
- Soft and deep tissue massage
- Strengthening program
- Taping
- Bracing
- Electrotherapy
- Dry needling

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