

GOLFERS' ELBOW - Information for Patients

What is Golfer's Elbow?

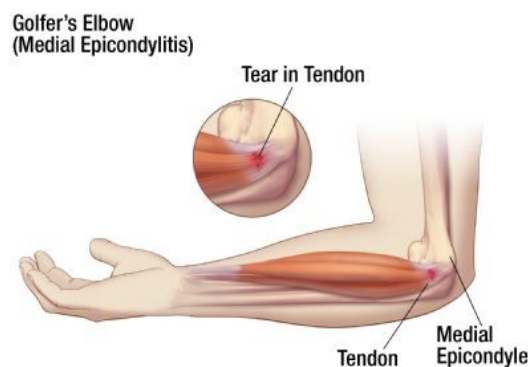
Golfer's elbow is pain on the inside of the elbow.

The medical name for golfer's elbow is medial epicondylitis. The medial epicondyle is the bony bit you can feel on the inside of your elbow (your funny bone).

The tendons of the muscles that run down the front of your arm and into your hand (flexor muscles) start from the medial epicondyle.

What causes Golfer's Elbow?

It is usually caused by overuse of the flexor muscles with repetitive movements and movements against resistance.



Overuse of the flexor muscles can cause micro-trauma to the tendon. This results in inflammation of the tendon. Although this is painful it does not cause long-lasting damage.

Signs and Symptoms of Golfer's Elbow:

- The medial epicondyle will usually be tender to touch and it may also be a little swollen. The pain may spread a little way down your forearm.
- The pain is made worse with gripping and twisting movements, e.g. opening jars, turning a door handle, lifting. Sometimes the pain can be constant.
- Golfer's elbow is more likely to be caused if you suddenly do a lot of activity that you are not used to. However it can also start for no apparent reason.
- Different people will experience varying degrees of pain, ranging from mild discomfort when using the arm to a severe ache.
- Repeated movements of the wrist and hand will make the pain worse.

How long will it last?

This is difficult to say and will largely depend on how long you have had it for and whether you are able to avoid doing the things that are making it worse (see overleaf for treatments). It is likely to take some week, possibly months to fully resolve.

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How is Golfer's Elbow Treated?

Avoiding activities that aggravate your symptoms is essential to allow the inflammation to settle. For some people, rest alone may be enough to resolve the pain.

Some people find **warmth** (e.g. a hot water bottle or wheat-bag) helpful.

An **ice pack** (a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp tea-towel) applied to the tender area for 10 minutes twice a day can help.

Anti-Inflammatory tablets or gels/creams may be helpful. Talk to your GP or pharmacist for further information and advice.

Painkillers may also be useful - talk to your GP or pharmacist for further information and advice.

A **steroid injection** into the painful area can relieve the pain. For some people the pain never returns after having a steroid injection, however for some the relief from pain is only for a short while.

The stretches and strengthening exercises shown below may help.

Exercises:

The aim of the exercises is to stretch and strengthen the flexor muscles. They should be done regularly, ideally 2-3 times a day. (Please note that in these exercises, the affected arm is the right).



1. Flexor Tendon Stretch

Put the palm of your hand against a wall and keep your elbow straight by supporting it with the other hand. Feel the stretch along the front of your forearm.

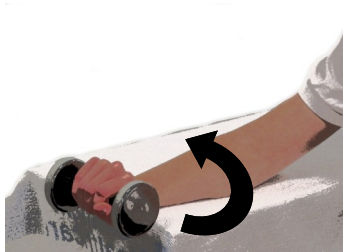
Hold the stretch for 20 - 30 seconds and repeat 2 times. To increase the stretch, slide your hand further up the wall.



2. Strengthening Exercise a)

Sit with your forearm resting on a table with your hand over the edge (palm facing up). Hold a light weight (e.g. a tin or water bottle) in your hand.

Lift the weight up (keeping your forearm on the table). Then slowly lower the weight down. Repeat 10 times.



3. Strengthening Exercise b)

Sit as for exercise 2 with a light weight in your hand.

Turn the hand so the palm is uppermost and the back of the hand is resting on the table. Turn the hand back over slowly so the palm is facing down. Repeat 10 times.