



[Home](#) → [Medical Encyclopedia](#) → Excessive carrying angle of the elbow

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Excessive carrying angle of the elbow

When your arms are held out at your sides and your palms are facing forward, your forearm and hands should normally point about 5 to 15 degrees away from your body. This is the normal "carrying angle" of the elbow. This angle allows your forearms to clear your hips when you swing your arms, such as during walking or other activities. It is also important when carrying objects.

Certain fractures of the elbow can increase the carrying angle of the elbow, causing the arms to stick out too much from the body. This is called an excessive carrying angle.

Other fractures of the elbow can decrease the carrying angle of the elbow. If the angle is decreased, the arm points toward the body. This is known as a "gunstock deformity."

Because the carrying angle varies from person to person, it is important to compare one elbow with the other when evaluating a problem with the carrying angle.

Alternative Names

Elbow carrying angle - excessive; Cubitus valgus

References

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