



Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow)

This injury involves an irritation and inflammation to the area on the outside of the elbow where the muscles which extend the wrist begin (the lateral epicondyle). The irritation often stems from repetitive movements or overuse of these muscles- especially with eccentric loading, where the muscle is lengthening as it generates force. This type of pain in the elbow can also originate in the neck.

Treatment focuses on decreasing the inflammation and irritation by using modalities, ice, rest and by addressing the factors which have caused it. Stretches are normally prescribed to relax the muscles and exercises will be given to better condition them. A 'tensor' strap may be of benefit during aggravating activities, and ice is essential afterwards.

The therapeutic modalities commonly used include:

Ultrasound: uses sound waves and may be used to decrease scar tissue, increase blood flow, or decrease pain.

Interferential Current: uses electrical current to decrease pain, can also be used to elicit muscle contraction and decrease swelling.

Acupuncture: uses small, solid needles to encourage healing, reduce pain, and improve function of affected areas of the body.

What can you do at home?

Rest: by decreasing your activity you allow your body a chance to heal itself. When you start to feel better it is important to ease back into activities which might be aggravating. Listen to your body - pain means that you have done too much.

Ice: ice decreases the metabolism of your cells so that they do not die despite a decrease in oxygen to the injured area. Ice should be kept on for approximately 15 minutes, several times a day. The injured area should be elevated (above the level of your heart) at the same time. Use a wet towel between the ice and your skin to protect against frostbite. You can use frozen veggies, cold packs, or real ice.