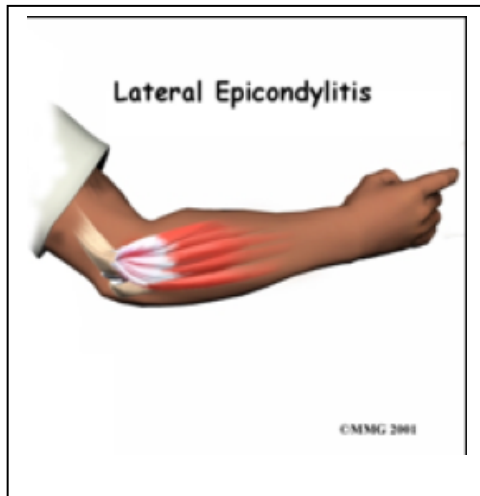


## TENNIS ELBOW – Lateral Epicondylitis



### What is it?

Commonly referred to as ‘**tennis elbow**’, or extensor tendinopathy or lateral epicondylitis refers to degeneration and inflammation within the tendons on the outside of the elbow. These tendons connect the forearm muscles to the arm bone. These muscles function to move the wrist, hand and fingers.

### How does it happen?

Tennis elbow is a common injury associated with activities requiring repetitive use of the wrist and hand, and results from overuse of the tendons on the outside of the forearm. The function of these tendons is to transmit forces produced by the forearm muscles to their origin from the arm bone. Repetitive use of the forearm muscles and, therefore, the forearm tendons can lead to microscopic tears within the tendons and degeneration or breakdown of the tendons. To repair this degeneration the body commences an inflammatory response.

### How does it feel?

The primary sensation with tennis elbow is pain felt on the outside of the elbow and forearm. This pain typically develops gradually. Initially, it may only be painful following exercise. Associated with the pain may be stiffness or tightness in the elbow and forearm region. Typically, these initial signs of Tennis elbow are ignored, as they disappear quickly with use of the arm or applying heat (i.e. a hot shower) over the elbow and forearm region. However, as you continue to exercise, the Tennis elbow and the pain within the tendon becomes more intense and more frequent. In the earlier stages, this pain during exercise may initially disappear as you warm up, only to return when you cool down. However, as you continue to exercise, the symptoms worsen and your pain may begin to be present for longer periods during exercise until it is present all of the time

### What should you do?

Tennis elbow generally does not get better on its own if the cause is not addressed and you continue to exercise and use it. If you have or suspect you have Tennis elbow, you should consult your nearest North City Physiotherapist. In the meantime, you can begin initial treatment. This should consist of icing following exercise or activity and regular gentle stretching of the forearm muscles. Icing should consist of crushed ice wrapped in a moist towel applied for 15–20 minutes or ice in a paper cup massaged over the outside of the elbow until the skin is numb.

### What shouldn't you do?

If you have or suspect you have Tennis elbow you shouldn't ignore the problem. Your pain may get better as you exercise; however, the exercise you are doing may be interfering with the healing process and causing further damage. This can lead to your injury getting worse such that your pain does not ‘warm up’ and you feel it throughout exercise. If this occurs, your recovery may be prolonged and it may take a number of weeks or months for you to return to pre-injury levels. .

### Could there be any long-term effects?

Tennis elbow does not produce any long-term effects, as long as it is properly diagnosed and appropriately treated. If not, it can lead to prolonged pain on the outside of the elbow and a prolonged healing time.

## What NORTH CITY PHYSIO CAN DO TO HELP:

The assistance of a North City Physiotherapist is important in the treatment of extensor Tennis elbow. Initially, they can assist in diagnosing the problem and establishing its severity. The North City Physiotherapist will be able to determine an appropriate treatment plan. This may involve activity modification, soft tissue treatment such as massage and stretching, and the progression through a series of specific strengthening exercises. The North City Physiotherapist will also be able to assess and determine why you developed Tennis elbow and address this during your recovery to prevent a re-occurrence when you return to full activity.

**PLEASE AT ALL TIMES CONSULT YOUR NORTH CITY PHYSIOTHERAPIST**