

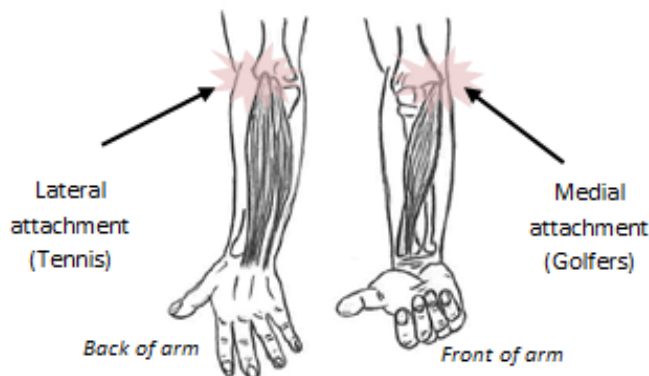
# Elbow Pain- (Tendonitis and Bursitis)

## Elbow Tendonitis

### (Tennis and Golfers Elbow)

Tendons are strong fibrous bands that attach muscles to bone. The tendons that move the wrist and forearm are attached to the elbow on both the inside (medial) elbow and outside (lateral) elbow. These tendons can become inflamed (tendinitis) or damaged from excessive force or overuse which causes pain.

**Tennis elbow** is inflammation of the ten-



don on the outside of the elbow and is caused by repeated grasping of the hand and extension (bending back) of the wrist during work or hobbies – it is actually only caused by “tennis” 5% of the time.

In acute / irritable cases, people often experience pain even when carrying light objects such as a cup. It is often made worse by lifting and grasping with the palm facing downwards.

**Golfers elbow** is inflammation of the inner elbow (near the “funny bone”). It affects people who play golf and sports that involve throwing, climbing or manual workers. It is caused by the forced action of gripping with the hand and bending the wrist towards the forearm.

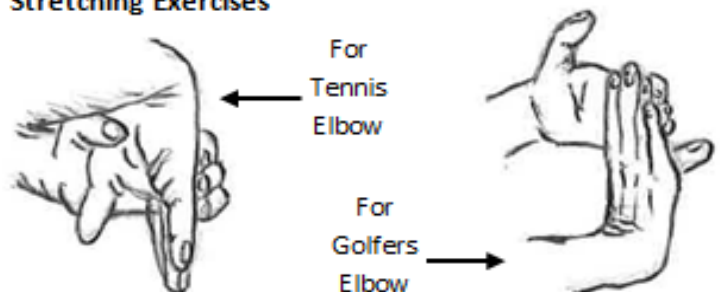
The diagnosis of Golfer’s and Tennis Elbow is usually made from your history and physical examination. Tests / scans are not usually required to confirm the diagnosis.

## Initial treatment (First 6 weeks)

- Avoid activities that increase the pain. If you feel pain, you are probably irritating the tendon which may cause ongoing problems.
- Take simple pain relief like oral and / or topical anti-inflammatories and paracetamol (check with your doctor which pain medications are safe for you to take).
- Daily gentle stretching within pain-free limits (below) then later strengthening exercises (overleaf) may speed your recovery.
- A properly fitted arm brace will apply gentle pressure on your forearm muscles to relieve some of the pressure on the tendons.
- See a Physiotherapist to have a thorough examination and to develop an individualised rehabilitation program.

## Ongoing treatment (after 6 weeks)

### Stretching Exercises



- If your pain is not gone after 6 weeks despite the above treatment, your doctor may consider further investigations (X-Ray or Ultrasound).
- Having a steroid injection has been shown to improve pain initially but will not prevent the problem returning and may even do harm.
- Most people will get better with the above and only very severe cases that have failed rehabilitation may benefit from surgery.

# Elbow Pain- (Tendonitis and Bursitis)

## Strengthening exercises

A type of strengthening exercise known as “isometric strengthening” can assist in building up the strength in your forearm muscles and speed the recovery process. These can be started once you’re able to move your wrist with little or no pain.

### • Tennis Elbow - Exercises

Place your sore arm, palm facing down on a table. Place your good hand over the knuckles of the sore hand. Gently push the knuckles of your sore up into the good hand and hold. You can repeat this exercise several times during the day. Stop if this exercise causes you pain.

### • Golfers Elbow - Exercises

Place your sore arm, palm facing up on the table. Place your good hand in the palm of your sore hand. Gently push the palm of your sore hand up into the good hand and hold. You can repeat this exercise several times during the day. Stop if this exercise causes you pain.

## Instructions

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## Seeking help:



In a medical emergency go to your nearest emergency department or call 000.

## Elbow Bursitis

On the outside of the elbow is a thin fluid-filled sac (bursa) to protect the soft tissues of the elbow from injury when you lean on your elbow. Inflammation of this bursa is commonly caused by excess pressure, inflammation of nearby joint (gout / arthritis), trauma or importantly, infection.

### Treatment options include:

- Avoiding pressure on the area and protecting it from further injury by using a cushion and resting the elbow joint is important.
- Apply an ice pack for 20 minutes several times each day.
- Simple anti-inflammatories will likely help (check with your doctor which pain medications are safe for you to take).
- In certain situations steroid injection may be considered – such as with persisting pain and swelling—check with your doctor.
- Very occasionally where bothersome symptoms have been present for over a year surgery may be considered.

Infection of the bursa (septic bursitis) requires urgent medical attention as antibiotics are required to treat this condition. Septic bursitis should be considered where there is redness, swelling and heat over the elbow and sometimes a fever. An infected bursa may need drainage or surgical removal.

### Return to the Emergency Department if:

- You develop a fever, redness and/or swelling over the joint, redness is spreading up or down the arm; or
- Experience chest pain / heaviness, shortness of breath or dizziness; or
- Your symptoms change or worsen.

