



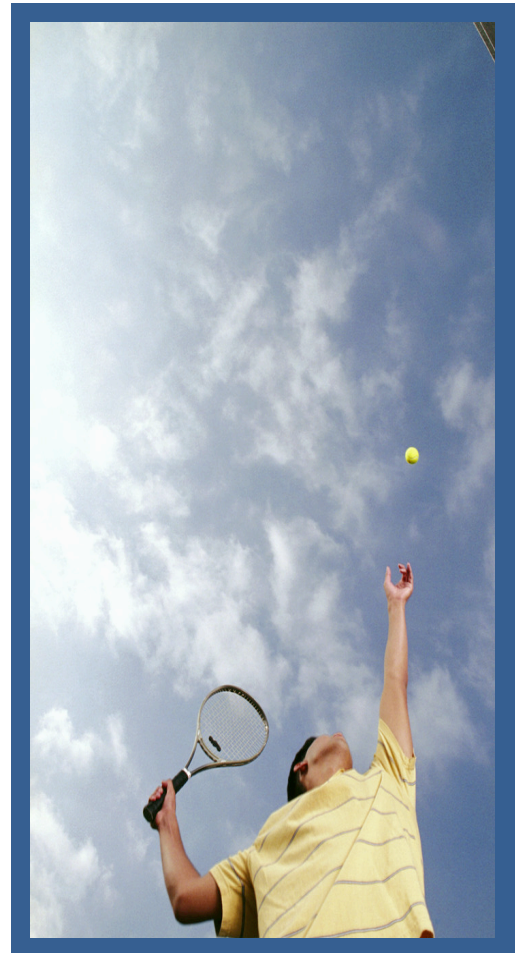
# Golfer's & Tennis Elbow

During the summer months, the number of people playing outdoor sports such as tennis and golf is at an all time high. Tennis and golf are becoming increasingly popular within the UK, with over 2000 golf courses nationwide and almost four million people playing tennis on a regular basis.

Tennis is a great all round sport, providing many different benefits. The arms, back, abdominals, bottom and legs all get a good work out during a game of tennis, and don't forget the rally, which is great cardiovascular exercise.

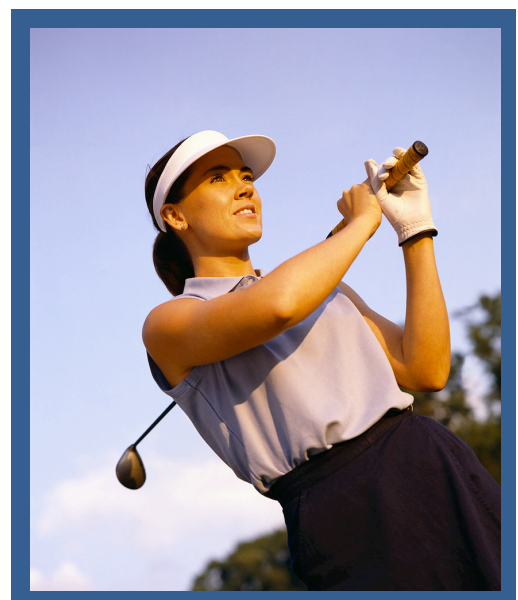
Although it may appear to be a slower paced sport, golf also has many advantages and can help improve fitness levels by increasing flexibility, stamina, co-ordination, strength and skill as well as burning calories whilst carrying golf bags across the long courses.

As with all sports however, care must be taken to avoid injury. A proper warm up and correct technique is vital in reducing the likelihood of sustaining an injury.



## Golfers' elbow (medial epicondylitis)

Golfers' elbow is an overuse injury to the inner part of the elbow caused by repetitive, forceful wrist movements. This is usually with the wrist bent at the point of contact with the ball, grounding the club, or excessive twisting of the forearms on the follow through. When done repeatedly, as in a game of golf, this results in a repetitive strain being placed on the muscles and tendons (wrist flexors) around the inside part of the elbow joint, and a severe inflammatory reaction and pain (tendonitis). As the name suggests, golfers can be susceptible to this type of injury, mainly at the beginning of the season as technique is at its most rusty. However, non-golfers are also susceptible with many injuries caused by everyday activities such as gardening and DIY.



a direct bang or blow to the inside part of the elbow, or if the cause is repetitive strain, tearing of the muscles can occur. Symptoms include: sharp pain over the inside part of the elbow (which may travel up or down the arm) when grasping objects, wrist weakness, tenderness to touch, pain at the inside part of the elbow on wrist movement and swelling.

## **Tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis)**

As with golfers elbow, tennis elbow is inflammation (tendonitis) of the muscles and tendons, but on the outer part of the joint. When placed under repetitive strain, joints can get irritated causing pain and inflammation where the wrist extensor muscles join to the elbow joint. The repetitive movements required for this injury to occur are usually forceful wrist movements, which bring the thumb outwards and the palm upwards, causing shortening of the muscles. When this occurs, a sudden movement at the wrist may cause a tear in the muscle or tendon.

Just as with golf, only 5% of people who suffer from this injury play tennis, with DIY and gardening as a more common reason for this injury. Symptoms include pain over the outside elbow, which may travel up or down the arm, wrist weakness, tenderness, pain when lifting or bending the arm, difficulty extending the forearm fully and pain when gripping, lifting and carrying.

## **What can be done?**

Pain from both golfers' and tennis elbow typically lasts from 6-12 weeks if it is an isolated injury. However, the condition can last up to several years if the injury is recurrent and does not receive the care needed.

The first step is to reduce the inflammation and rest the elbow as much as possible. Ice is very effective in the first 2-3 days, but can be used for longer periods. Sometimes, an epicondylitis brace (medial or lateral) can help if the problem is persistent or recurrent. Your **Chiropractor** will examine and treat any areas relating to elbow function such as the wrists, elbow, shoulder and neck.

Once the pain has subsided, a stretching programme should be followed, taking care that the exercises are done slowly and carefully, so as to avoid re-injury.

Prevention is better than cure – the best way to reduce the risk of injury is to warm up properly and stop when tired, as technique can falter. Always warm up and stretch before exercising and cool down.

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