

Prepared for: \_\_\_\_\_

Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_

## Therapeutic Exercise Program for Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow / Golfer's Elbow)

*To ensure that this exercise program is safe and effective for you, it should be performed under your doctor's supervision. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about which exercises will best help you meet your rehabilitation goals.*

Both tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) and golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis) are painful conditions caused by overuse. Over time, the forearm muscles and tendons become damaged from repeating the same motions again and again. This leads to pain and tenderness around the elbow.

### *Purpose of Program*

Specific exercises to stretch and strengthen the muscles attached to the injured tendon will help with the healing process. The early goal of a therapeutic exercise program is to promote muscle endurance and improve resistance to repetitive stress.

Following a well-structured conditioning program will help you return to daily activities, as well as sports and other recreational pastimes.

**Length of program:** This exercise program for epicondylitis should be continued for 6 to 12 weeks, unless otherwise specified by your doctor or physical therapist. After your recovery, your doctor or physical therapist can instruct you in how these exercises can be continued as a maintenance program for lifelong protection and health of your elbows.

**Do not ignore pain:** You should not feel pain during an exercise, however, some degree of discomfort is normal. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist if you have any pain while completing this program.

**Ask questions:** If you are not sure how to do an exercise, or how often to do it, contact your doctor or physical therapist.

### Additional Notes from Your Clinician



## Exercise Program for Epicondylitis

### STRETCHING EXERCISES

#### 1. Wrist Extension Stretch

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##### Repetitions

5 reps,  
4x a day

##### Days per week

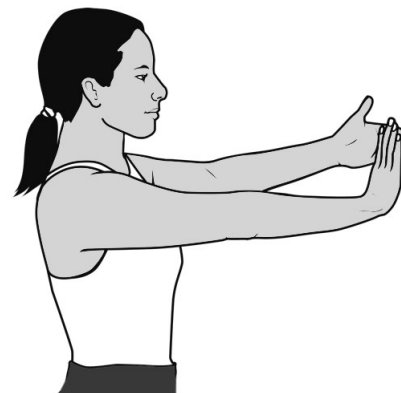
5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** None

**Additional instructions:** This stretch should be done throughout the day, especially before activity. After recovery, this stretch should be included as part of a warm-up to activities that involve gripping, such as gardening, tennis, and golf.

##### Step-by-step directions

- Straighten your arm and bend your wrist back as if signaling someone to “stop.”
- Use your opposite hand to apply gentle pressure across the palm and pull it toward you until you feel a stretch on the inside of your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.



**Tip** Do not lock your elbow.

#### 2. Wrist Flexion Stretch

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##### Repetitions

5 reps,  
4x a day

##### Days per week

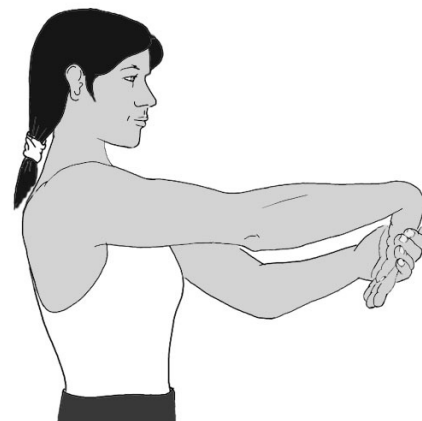
5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** None

**Additional instructions:** This stretch should be done throughout the day, especially before activity. After recovery, this stretch should be included as part of a warm-up to activities that involve gripping, such as gardening, tennis, and golf.

##### Step-by-step directions

- Straighten your arm with your palm facing down and bend your wrist so that your fingers point down.
- Gently pull your hand toward your body until you feel a stretch on the outside of your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.



**Tip** Do not lock your elbow.



## Exercise Program for Epicondylitis

### STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

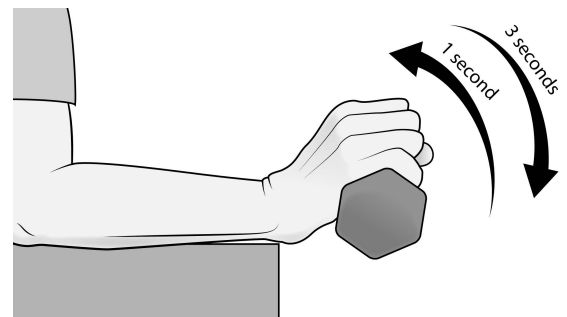
#### 3. Wrist Extension (Strengthening)

<b>Repetitions</b>
30 reps, 1x a day
<b>Days per week</b>
5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** Dumbbell hand weights (1 lb., 2 lbs., 3 lbs.)

**Additional instructions:** This exercise should be performed in stages. Begin each stage with no weight. When you are able to complete 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days with no increase in pain, move forward in the program by increasing weight (begin with 1 lb., advance to 2 lbs., end with 3 lbs.).

**Stage 1:** Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and support your forearm on a table with your wrist placed at the edge. Early in rehabilitation for painful lateral epicondylitis, just doing the lowering down portion of this exercise using a light (1 to 3 lb.) dumbbell can help resolve acute pain before progressing to doing the complete motion once there is less pain. Use the opposite hand to help push the wrist up as far as possible. Then, without assistance, slowly lower the weight until the wrist is flexed again.



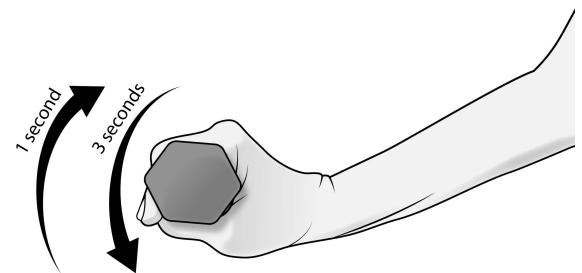
Stage 1 using 1 lb. weight

**Stage 2:** Straighten your elbow slightly. Continue to support your arm on the table.

**Stage 3:** Fully straighten your elbow and lift your arm so that it is no longer supported by the table.

#### Step-by-step directions to be followed for each stage

- With palm down, bend your wrist up as far as possible.
- Hold up for 1 count, then slowly lower 3 counts.
- Begin without using a weight and increase the repetitions until you can complete 30.
- When you can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain, begin performing the exercise using a 1 lb. weight.
- Follow the same steps above to continue to increase repetitions and weight until you are using a 3 lb. weight and can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain.



Stage 3 using 1 lb. weight

**Tip** Do not let the weight pull your hand down too quickly.



## Exercise Program for Epicondylitis

### STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

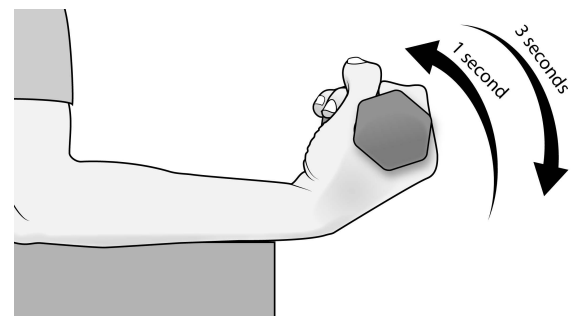
#### 4. Wrist Flexion (Strengthening)

<b>Repetitions</b>
30 reps, 1x a day
<b>Days per week</b>
5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** Dumbbell hand weights (1 lb., 2 lbs., 3 lbs.)

**Additional instructions:** This exercise should be performed in stages. Begin each stage with no weight. When you are able to complete 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days with no increase in pain, move forward in the program by increasing weight (begin with 1 lb., advance to 2 lbs., end with 3 lbs.).

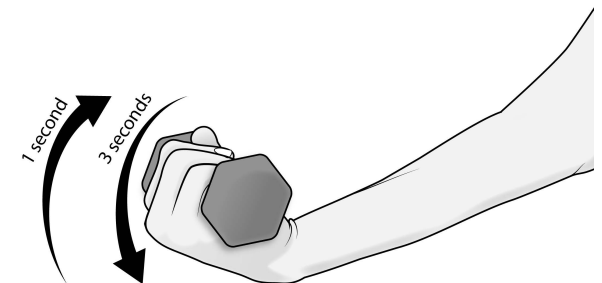
**Stage 1:** Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and support your forearm on a table with your wrist placed at the edge. Early in rehabilitation for painful medial epicondylitis, just doing the lowering down portion of this exercise using a light (1 to 3 lb.) dumbbell can help resolve acute pain before progressing to doing the complete motion once there is less pain. Use the opposite hand to help push the wrist up as far as possible. Then, without assistance, slowly lower the weight until the wrist is flexed again.



Stage 1 using 1 lb. weight

**Stage 2:** Straighten your elbow slightly. Continue to support your arm on the table.

**Stage 3:** Fully straighten your elbow and lift your arm so that it is no longer supported by the table.



Stage 3 using 1 lb. weight

#### Step-by-step directions to be followed for each stage

- With palm up, bend your wrist up as far as possible.
- Hold up for 1 count, then slowly lower 3 counts.
- Begin without using a weight and increase the repetitions until you can complete 30.
- When you can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain, begin performing the exercise using a 1 lb. weight.
- Follow the same steps above to continue to increase repetitions and weight until you are using a 3 lb. weight and can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain.

**Tip** Do not let the weight pull your hand down too quickly.



## Exercise Program for Epicondylitis

### STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

#### 5. Forearm Supination & Pronation (Strengthening)

<b>Repetitions</b>
30 reps, 1x a day
<b>Days per week</b>
5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** Dumbbell hand weights (1 lb., 2 lbs., 3 lbs.)

**Additional instructions:** This exercise should be performed in stages. Begin each stage with no weight. When you are able to complete 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days with no increase in pain, move forward in the program by increasing weight (begin with 1 lb., advance to 2 lbs., end with 3 lbs.).

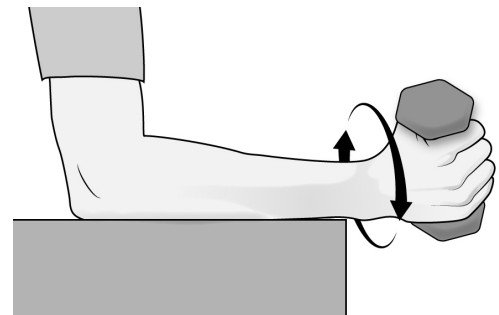
**Stage 1:** Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and support your forearm on a table with your wrist placed at the edge.

**Stage 2:** Straighten your elbow slightly. Continue to support your arm on the table.

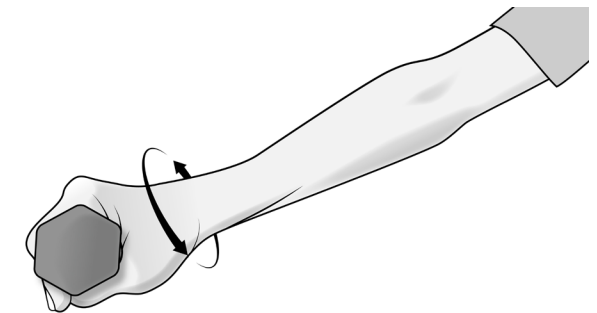
**Stage 3:** Fully straighten your elbow and lift your arm so that it is no longer supported by the table.

#### Step-by-step directions to be followed for each stage

- Begin with palm facing the side. Slowly turn the palm facing up.
- Slowly return to the start position, then slowly turn the palm down.
- Slowly return to start position. This completes one repetition.
- Begin without using a weight and increase the repetitions until you can complete 30.
- When you can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain, begin performing the exercise using a 1 lb. weight.
- Follow the same steps above to continue to increase repetitions and weight until you are using a 3 lb. weight and can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain.



Stage 1 using 1 lb. weight



Stage 3 using 1 lb. weight

**Tip** When using a dumbbell, try to let the weight pull your forearm in either direction as far as possible.



## Exercise Program for Epicondylitis

### STRENGTHENING EXERCISES

#### 7. Stress Ball Squeeze

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##### Repetitions

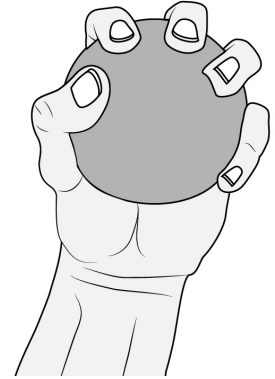
10 reps,  
1x day

##### Days per week

5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** Rubber stress ball

**Additional instructions:** This exercise should be performed after completing the above staged strengthening exercises. Your arm and elbow position for this exercise should match the stage you are completing.



#### 8. Finger Stretch

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##### Repetitions

10 reps,  
1x day

##### Days per week

5 to 7

**Equipment needed:** Elastic band

**Additional instructions:** This exercise should be performed after completing the above staged strengthening exercises. Your arm and elbow position for this exercise should match the stage you are completing.

