TENNIS ELBOW

BAYSIDE HAND THERAPY
Rehabilitation of the Hand, Wrist and Elbow
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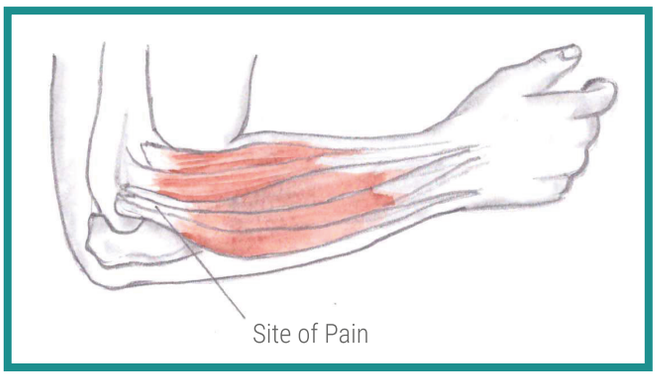
FACT SHEET

WHAT IS TENNIS ELBOW?

Tennis elbow (also referred to as tendinosis or lateral epicondylalgia) is the most common cause of pain on the outside of the elbow. The condition involves degenerative changes in the tendons on the outside of the elbow where the wrist muscles originate. Sometimes there may be a tear in the tendon. Symptoms include tenderness near the bone on the outside of the elbow (lateral epicondyle), pain in the elbow during gripping, and a loss of strength.

WHAT CAUSES TENNIS ELBOW?

Tennis elbow is most commonly the result of overuse/ repetitive trauma, but occasionally results from a direct blow to the elbow.



Counter-force brace

HOW CAN HAND THERAPY HELP?

Hand therapy can help in several ways.

1. Carefully graded exercises based on the latest research.
2. Advice about which actions to avoid in order to prevent aggravation of the condition.
3. A counterforce brace may be fitted which redirects force away from the damaged tendons during gripping.
4. Taping to offload tension from the damaged tendon.
5. Electrical modalities to promote healing and reduce pain.
6. In very severe cases – a short period of rest in a wrist splint may be required.

As with all overuse conditions recovery is always better when treatment is commenced early.

OTHER TREATMENT

Corticosteroid injection is sometimes offered as a treatment for lateral elbow tendinosis, however there are a number of research studies which show that although corticosteroid injection provides good short term pain relief, long term recovery is poorer and recurrence rates are much higher than following physiotherapy treatment or no treatment. Consequently, use of corticosteroid injection for this condition is increasingly discouraged.