



Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Elbow Injury

Issued by Emergency Care Centre / Minor Injury Unit



This leaflet is to give you advice about your elbow problems.

Causes of elbow problems

Tennis elbow (inflammation and pain of the elbow) – Common following continual gripping and twisting movements.

You may feel pain on the outside of your elbow on gripping, twisting movements or if you knock your elbow.

Golfers elbow (inflammation and pain of the elbow) – Common following continual gripping and twisting movements.

You may feel pain on the outside of your elbow on gripping, twisting movements or if you knock your elbow.

Injury – Soft tissue injuries following an injury to the elbow.

Bursitis – Swelling over the elbow, this may or may not be infected.

Benefits

Following the advice in this leaflet should improve your symptoms.

Risks and side effects

There is usually swelling following an elbow injury. This swelling should be reduced as soon as possible to prevent complications and help with pain relief.

Alternatives / Options for treatment

Painkillers

Simple painkillers or anti-inflammatory tablets or creams that can be bought at the chemists can be helpful (please ask your pharmacist for advice).

Infection

If you have an infection you will have been given some antibiotics by the clinician who has seen you. You must take the whole course.

Ice packs

Ice packs help to reduce inflammation during early stages following an injury. It cools the area down and reduces swelling.

How to use ice packs

Use a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice cubes placed in a plastic bag.

Protect your skin from ice burns with a damp flannel or cloth. Place your cold pack on top of the painful area and wrap the towel around to hold it in place. Never apply ice directly to the skin as this may result in an ice burn.

Ice packs can be applied two or three times a day for 20 minutes, leaving two hours between applications.

By following this advice your symptoms should improve. If they do not improve you should seek advice from your GP or physiotherapist.

Heat packs

Alternatively, heat may help to soothe the pain or relieve stiffness in a long-standing problem.

Use a warm towel or hot water bottle wrapped in a towel. Place on the affected area and leave for approximately 10 minutes every two hours (ensure the bottle is not scalding hot). Care must be taken on areas of the body with loss of feeling.

Exercises

Following an elbow injury it is important to restore the joint to its normal range of movement. This is achieved through gentle stretches and exercises performed within the limits of pain.

Gentle exercises help return muscles to their normal function and prevent further injuries.

Exercises should be performed regularly throughout the day. You should repeat each exercise approximately 5 times per hour and gradually increase as the pain decreases.

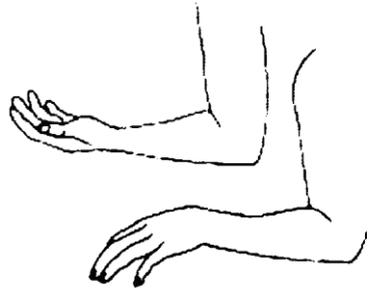
1. From a straight position, bend your elbow upwards.

Hold it for about 10 seconds then straighten in again.



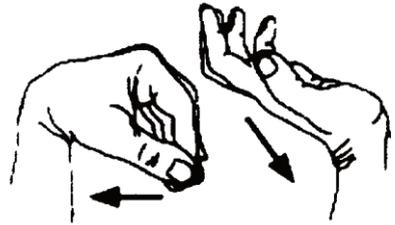
2. Bend your elbow to 90 degrees with your palm facing upwards.

Keeping your elbow bent and shoulder still, turn your lower arm until your palm is facing the floor.



3. Bend your wrist forwards.

Hold for approximately 10 seconds then bend it backwards and hold for approximately 10 seconds.



Contact

Should you have any questions or queries please ring 0844 811 8111 and ask for one of the following:

A&E Reception, Wansbeck General Hospital
(Open from 8am to 10pm)

A&E Reception, North Tyneside General Hospital
(Open from 8am to Midnight)

A&E Reception, Hexham Children's Unit, Wansbeck
(Open from 8am to 10pm)

Alnwick Minor Injury Unit (Open 24hours)

Berwick Minor Injury Unit (Open 24 hours)

Blyth Minor Injury Unit (Open from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

You can call NHS 111 for urgent medical advice 24/7.

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**

Other sources of information

NHS 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: 01670 511098

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

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General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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