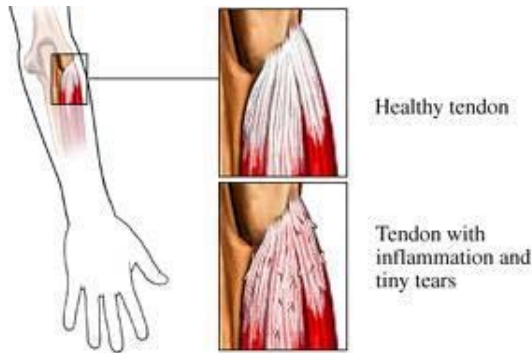


ELBOW PAIN

You've most likely heard of both of these conditions, but may be a little confused about which is which, and what you might be suffering with. Basically, if you have pain on the top (outside) of your elbow, you have 'tennis elbow', and if it is on the underside (near the 'funny bone'), it's golfer's elbow. Both conditions are similar in nature, but are caused by different wrist and elbow activities.



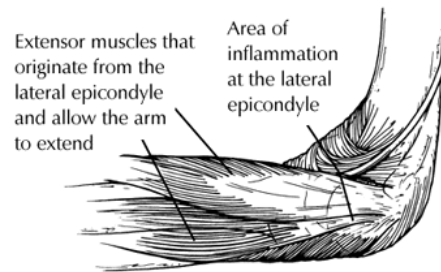
CAUSES

Tennis Elbow is caused by stress and eventual microscopic tearing and inflammation of muscle and tendon where your wrist extensors, the muscles which bend your wrist back, attach to the outside of your elbow. Activities which can aggravate this condition are: a weak tennis backhand, prolonged hammering, working at a computer keyboard, activities involving holding the wrist back and using the fingers to grip or perform small

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movements like spraying a hairspray bottle or lifting a carton of milk.

Golfer's Elbow involves the same microscopic trauma, but involves the muscles which flex, or bend your wrist toward your forearm. Activities which aggravate this condition can be: striking the ball during your golf swing (the elbow of the dominant, or shooting side will feel the stress), and activities which involve gripping with the fingers or gripping and turning the wrist, like using a wrench or carrying groceries.



Lateral (outside) view of the left elbow

PREVENTION / TREATMENT

- When performing repetitive activities such as typing, hammering, carrying, etc., make sure your wrist is well supported in a neutral position (the mid-way point between flexion and extension). This can be accomplished by consciously maintaining this position, or with the help of various external supports or splints.

- If you do a job or like to play a sport which might make you prone to developing either of these conditions, be sure to keep the muscles of your forearm strong, particularly your wrist extensor muscles. You can do wrist curls and wrist extension exercises with small weights at the gym, at work on your break, or at home.
- Make sure your wrist flexor and extensor muscles are well stretched out all the time, and adequately warmed-up before playing your sport or doing any strenuous activity.
- Make sure your tennis racquet, golf club or tools have proper grip or handle sizes.
- If you do end up having symptoms of either of these conditions, be sure to modify the aggravating activity immediately.
- Seek the advice of a physiotherapist who will help you identify the cause, help to reduce the inflammation, and show you stretching and strengthening exercises that will prevent the condition from becoming chronic.
- Furthermore, a physiotherapist will advise you if bracing is necessary, and if so, the type of brace that would be suitable for you. There are excellent braces available these days, but it is important to have the type and size suit you and your condition for the most effective relief of symptoms.