



The
ORTHOPAEDIC
 CLINIC

REGIONAL ORTHOPAEDIC EXCELLENCE

TENNIS ELBOW

Tennis elbow, or *lateral epicondylitis*, is a painful condition of the elbow caused by overuse. Not surprisingly, playing tennis or other racquet sports can cause this condition, but several other sports and activities can also put you at risk.

Tennis elbow is an inflammation of the tendons that join the forearm muscles on the outside of the elbow. The forearm muscles and tendons become damaged from overuse — repeating the same motions again and again. This leads to pain and tenderness on the outside of the elbow.

Athletes are not the only people who get tennis elbow. Many people with tennis elbow participate in work or recreational activities that require repetitive and vigorous use of the forearm muscle.

Painters, plumbers, and carpenters are particularly prone to developing tennis elbow. Studies have shown that auto workers, cooks, and even butchers get tennis elbow more often than the rest of the population.

The symptoms of tennis elbow usually develop gradually. In most cases, the pain begins as mild and slowly worsens over weeks and months. There is usually no specific injury associated with the start of symptoms.

Common signs and symptoms of tennis elbow include:

- Pain or burning on the outer part of your elbow
- Weak grip strength
- Elbow pain with grasping or gripping

When it comes to bone and joint problems, The Orthopaedic Clinic has got you covered. Our doctors have specialized fellowship training in all of the major areas of orthopedic surgery; hand and wrist, foot and ankle, sports medicine, back and neck and joint replacement. They bring their skill, expertise and experience from some of the most prestigious institutions across the country to East Alabama to provide excellent orthopedic care to our region.



The symptoms are often worsened with forearm activity, such as holding a racquet, turning a wrench, or shaking hands. Your dominant arm is most often affected; however both arms can be affected.

Your Orthopaedic Clinic doctor will consider many factors in making a diagnosis. These include how your symptoms

developed, any occupational risk factors, and recreational sports participation.

During the examination, your doctor will use a variety of tests to pinpoint the diagnosis. For example, he may ask you to try to straighten your wrist and fingers against resistance with your arm fully straight to see if this causes

pain. If the tests are positive, it tells him that those muscles may not be healthy.

X-rays may be taken to rule out arthritis of the elbow. An MRI scan may be ordered to help him see if you have a possible herniated disk or arthritis in your neck. Both of these conditions often produce arm pain.

Approximately 80% to 95% of patients have success with nonsurgical treatment. Nonsurgical treatment includes rest from the activities that cause your pain, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like Naproxen, ibuprofen or others, arm braces and straps, physical therapy, steroid injections and platelet rich plasma (PRP) injections.

PRP has over 1,500 healing factors and has been shown to help with chronic tendonitis. The specialists at The Orthopaedic Clinic are the only doctors in the area offering this innovative, cutting-edge treatment option.

If your symptoms do not respond after 6 to 12 months of nonsurgical treatments, your doctor may recommend surgery. Most surgical procedures for tennis elbow involve removing or releasing the diseased muscle tissue.

The right surgical approach for you will depend on a range of factors but this surgery can be done arthroscopically which makes your recovery quicker, easier and less painful.

If you have these symptoms, let our elbow specialists evaluate you and help you get over that nagging elbow pain.



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