

Introduction

Tennis elbow and Golfer's elbow are both tendon injuries affecting the elbow, but they involve different tendons and sides of the elbow. While both conditions are often linked to repetitive motions, you don't need to play golf or tennis to experience them.

Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis):

- **Location:** Pain on the outer side of the elbow.
- **Cause:** Often related to repetitive wrist and forearm movements, like those used in racket sports or manual tasks, affecting the tendons that extend the wrist and fingers.
- **Symptoms:** Pain and tenderness on the outside of the elbow, potentially radiating down the forearm.

Golfer's Elbow (Medial Epicondylitis):

- **Location:** Pain on the inner side of the elbow.
- **Cause:** Often linked to repetitive wrist and forearm movements that flex the wrist and close the fingers, like gripping or lifting.
- **Symptoms:** Pain and tenderness on the inside of the elbow, potentially radiating to the wrist.

What can I do?

If you are suffering mild or occasional symptoms, you may first wish to try and manage it yourself. There are a few things that might help, including:

- Try to avoid or reduce activities that make your symptoms worse. Try to introduce a wider range of movement, reduce force or change grip.
- Over-the-counter medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen may provide short term relief from painful symptoms but should not be relied on for long term treatment.
- Try using a hot or cold pack (or a bag of frozen peas) wrapped in a towel on the affected area for up to 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours.
- Try doing simple exercises, such as bending and straightening your arm.
- Try wearing a forearm strap or a wrist or elbow brace – you can buy these from pharmacies

Exercises that might help:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/conditions/elbow-pain/video-exercises-elbow-pain>

What if these suggestions don't help?

For moderate or severe symptoms, or for mild symptoms that do not respond to self-care, then you should seek review with your family doctor (GP) or Occupational Health Practitioner.

What treatments are available?

Tennis elbow usually gets better after resting your arm for a few weeks, but it can sometimes last longer. If symptoms persist:

- Your GP may prescribe stronger anti-inflammatory tablets.
- You might consider seeking review by a physiotherapist
- Ultrasound therapy may help. High-frequency sound waves are used to increase blood flow, which can reduce pain and speed up healing.
- Surgery may be an option if you still have tennis elbow after 6 to 12 months.

Special Considerations

If you believe that your symptoms may have been caused by work, you should raise the issue with your manager or Occupational Health Practitioner.

Short term adjustments or a temporary redeployment may provide the rest needed for inflammation to subside and an ergonomic review of the process or task might help to identify and reduce the risk of harmful movement or force causing further problems in the future.

Further information may be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/tennis-elbow/>

<https://roh.nhs.uk/services-information/therapy/golfers-elbow>

A copy of this leaflet may be downloaded from:

<https://mohs.co.uk/resources/>

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Tennis & Golfer's Elbow A Guide for Employees



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