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Medial Epicondylalgia (Golfers elbow)

Medial epicondylalgia, also referred to as golfers elbow, is an overuse injury affecting the flexor-pronator muscles of the forearm. It is the most common cause of elbow pain felt on the inside.

Symptoms

Pain at the inside of elbow is a classic symptom of medial epicondylalgia. The pain may increase when flexing the wrist, and may radiate down the forearm. Activities that use the flexor muscles and wrist in a bending motion or grasping with the hand can increase the symptoms.

How does it occur?

It is thought that overuse of the wrist flexors creates cumulative stress, and small tears in the tendon. This causes inflammation and pain. As the tendon repairs, scar tissue may form. Some physicians believe that a lack of blood flow to the degenerative tendons makes them weak and prone to injury.

Physiotherapy Management

- Deep tissue friction massage to reduce the formation of scar tissue.
- Joint mobilizations
- Stretches to regain normal muscle length.
- Taping and/or bracing
- Functional and eccentric strengthening
- Acupuncture and Myofascial cupping techniques
- Modalities such as ultrasound to promote healing
- Advice on graded return to activity and sport.

What to expect

You will have to decrease, or if possible avoid activities that cause pain in order to reduce the stress on the damaged tendon. The duration of this rest period varies according to how long you have been experiencing the symptoms and how easily they are provoked, during this period you may also be given a brace to reduce the pain associated with some tasks. The nature of tendon injuries are that they heal at a slower rate than other tissues, complete rehabilitation of degenerated tissue will take 6 -12 weeks depending on severity. Return to pre-injury function needs to be progressed carefully and time periods will depend on condition severity and the nature of your sport or activities.

Other sources of elbow pain

1. Lateral epicondylalgia.
2. Referred pain from the cervical or upper thoracic spine.
3. Neural tension or nerve entrapment.
4. Joint sprain or trauma.

Shop No. P16, NorthPoint, 100 Miller St. North Sydney. NSW – 2060

T – (02) 99222212 F – (02) 99225577 W: www.physio4all.com.au E: info@physio4all.com.au

ABN: 77 548 297 578