



WHAT IS GOLFER'S ELBOW?

Golfer's elbow, also known as medial epicondylitis is defined as an overuse of the common tendon that attaches into the inner aspect of the elbow (medial epicondyle)

Tendons are structures that attach a muscle to bone and in the case golfers elbow the muscles responsible for flexing the fingers and wrist attach into the medial epicondyle of the elbow. Overuse of the muscles and subsequent tendon cause initial inflammation, followed by disrepair and degeneration.



MECHANISM AND CAUSES OF INJURY:

The patient may report an increased in load on the tendon that may come from increased hours and more days per week completing a gripping or wrist flexion task. Golfer's elbow can often be associated with a rapid increase in activity that isn't regular e.g. spending a weekend doing house renovations or going water-skiing after a long break.

CLASSIFICATION OF INJURY:

Golfer's elbow can be classified into the following stages:

1. *Reactive tendinopathy* which refers to a rapid increase in loading;
2. *Tendon disrepair* often follows a reactive tendinopathy if the tendon continues to be excessively loaded;
3. *Degenerative tendinopathy* represents the response of the common elbow flexor tendon to chronic overloading.

DIAGNOSIS:

An extensive subjective history will guide the physiotherapist in the correct direction for diagnosis. The physiotherapist will also look for area of pain, muscles tightness and weakness, joint mobility and often test for aggravating activities. Pain will often occur on resisting wrist flexion and palpating the medial epicondyle and associated tendon.

Tendon compromise will be seen on MRI or US in the way of tendon thickening, swelling and disorganisation of the tendon.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS:

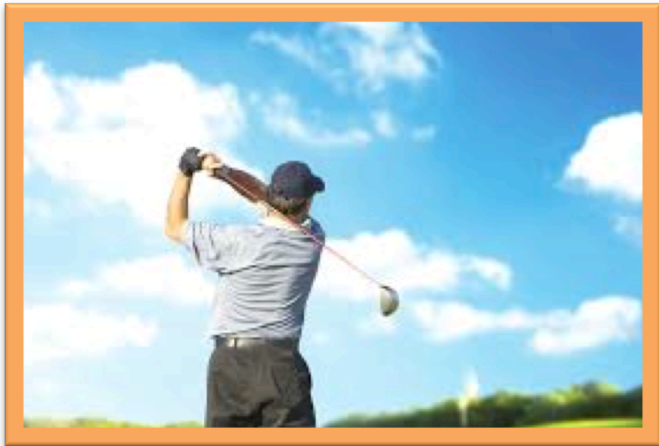
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- Painful elbow over the common flexor tendon;
- Reduced grip strength
- Pain with gripping tasks;
- Trigger points and tightness in the forearm flexor muscles;
- Ache following aggravating activity



PHYSIOTHERAPY TREATMENT OPTIONS:

- Deep tissue massage
- Mobilization with movement techniques
- Kinesio Taping
- Joint mobilization
- Tool and sporting equipment modification
- Education
- Facial scrapping techniques
- Stretching program
- Dry Needling
- Electrotherapy
- Exercise prescription including concentric and eccentric programs;



FURTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS:

Tendon injuries are a very slow healing structure and often require further medical treatment in regards to injections from a sports doctor. Common types of injections include cortisone, saline and platelet rich plasma (PRP).

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Use ice massage over the tendon after exercise and gripping work;
- Self massage through the medial forearm will help;
- Exercise programs associated with golfer's elbow can be long and boring but must be adhered to for appropriate recovery.