

## **Extensor tendinopathy (tennis elbow)**

Commonly referred to as 'tennis elbow', extensor tendinopathy refers to degeneration and inflammation within the tendons on the outside of the elbow. These muscles function to move the wrist, hand and fingers

Extensor tendinopathy is a common injury associated with activities requiring repetitive use of the wrist and hand and thus overuse of the tendons which control these movements. Repetitive use of the forearm muscles, and therefore the forearm tendons, can lead to microscopic tears, degeneration, inflammation and essentially pain.

The primary sensation felt with extensor tendinopathy is pain on the outside of the elbow and forearm. This pain typically develops gradually. Initially the pain may decrease with exercise and warmth and become noticeable again when you cool down or cease your activity.

Extensor tendinopathy generally does not get better on its own if the cause is not addressed and you continue to exercise. If you suspect you have extensor tendinopathy you should consult your nearest physiotherapist. In the meantime treatment should consist of gentle stretching, cessation of activity (if possible) and the use of ice over the painful area

The assistance of a physiotherapist is important in the treatment of extensor tendinopathy. Initially they can assist in diagnosing the problem and establishing its severity. From this, a physiotherapist will be able to determine an appropriate treatment plan. This may involve activity modification, soft tissue treatment, ultrasound, interferential, stretching and specific strengthening exercises. The physiotherapist will also be able to determine why you developed extensor tendinopathy and address this during your recovery to prevent reoccurrence

Although not within the scope of a physiotherapist, a medical practitioner may also be required if pain killing or anti-inflammatory medication is indicated. A doctor may also wish to conduct further investigations such as an ultrasound or MRI to determine its true severity.