

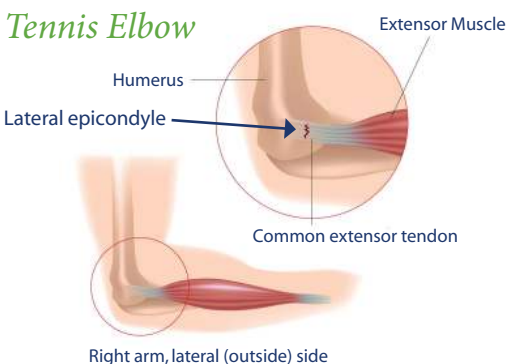
## Tennis Elbow

*“Working with a knowledgeable hand therapist can make the difference between success and failure in complex hand surgical cases. The therapist extends the continuum of our care, as well as functioning as coach and trainer for our patients.”*

*Marybeth Ezaki, MD, Past President, American Society for Surgery of the Hand*

### What is tennis elbow?

Tennis elbow, also known as lateral epicondylitis, lateral tendinosis, or lateral epicondylitis, is a condition that involves tendons located around the outside of the elbow. These tendons, which anchor muscle to bone, work to extend the wrist or fingers. Over time these tendons degenerate, weakening the attachment site and placing a strain on the muscles.



### What are the symptoms of tennis elbow?

Patients complain of pain around their elbow, usually on the bony point just above the outside of the elbow called the lateral epicondyle. The area may be tender to touch. Patients may report weakness and an inability to perform their normal activities of daily living, such as lifting a cup of coffee.

### What causes tennis elbow?

Many patients diagnosed with tennis elbow have never played tennis at all! Any activity, such as gripping or repeated grasping, can strain the tendon

attachment to the lateral epicondyle. The most common age group is between 30-60 years old, although it can occur in younger and older patients.

### What is the treatment for tennis elbow?

Conservative (nonsurgical) treatment through a physician can include anti-inflammatory medications and steroid injections into the painful area. A physician can also provide a referral to a qualified hand therapist. Surgery is often only considered if the pain is severe, and/or symptoms have been present for six months or longer.

### What can a hand therapist do for me?

A hand therapist can provide conservative management for the treatment of tennis elbow, with the goal to return the patient back to normal work, home and sports activities. A therapist can help identify what activities might aggravate symptoms, and discuss activity modifications. A custom-fabricated brace or orthosis for the wrist might be recommended to rest the area. Various treatments can be utilized, such as heat, ice, ultrasound, massage or electrical stimulation. The therapist will often prescribe stretching and strengthening exercises. Following any surgery for tennis elbow, therapy is important to regain motion and strength.



*Orthosis for tennis elbow to help rest the affected area.*