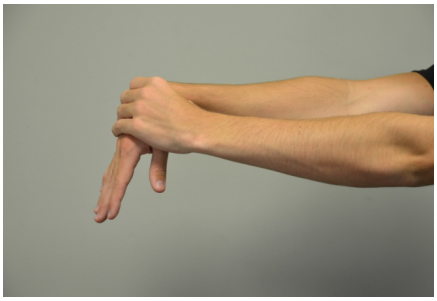
Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow) Home Exercises

It may take seven to ten weeks for you to feel a lot less pain and a better grip so it is important to keep going with the program for at least this long. More than seven out of ten people with tennis elbow have no pain and an improved grip after completing this exercise program.

1) **Manual Stretching:** Gentle stretching exercises including wrist flexion, extension and rotation. The elbow should be extended and not flexed to increase the amount of stretch as required. These stretches should be held for 20-30 seconds and repeated 5-10 times, at least twice a day. Vigorous stretching should be avoided – do not stretch to the point of pain that reproduces your symptoms.

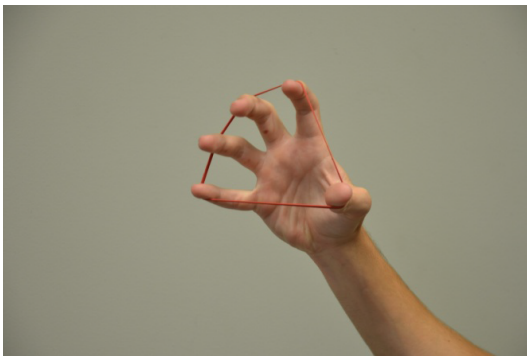


2) **Eccentric Stretches with Band:** A) Fix the band firmly under your foot and hold the other end in your hand. Place your elbows straight as possible over your knee and let your wrist towards the floor. B) Use your free hand to pull your wrist back towards you stretching the band with it. C) Your free hand must so all the work to bring your wrist back. D) Gently let go with the supporting hand. Slowly let the band pull your wrist down towards the floor. You have now done one exercise. You will need to do this exercise 15 times, rest for a minute, do 15 more exercises, rest for a minute, do a final 15 exercises.

You will have now finished one full exercise session. For this program you will need to do two exercise sessions each day for 12 weeks. Here are some important notes to remember:

- Stop the exercises very slowly with a loose band
- You should feel moderate pain in your elbow towards the end of the exercise session
- Shorten the band or use a stiffer band to make the exercise harder as the pain reduces
- Start to work a little more quickly once you can do a whole session with a stiff band with no pain

3) **Finger Extension:** Place a rubber band around all five finger tips. Spread fingers 25 times, repeat 3 times. If resistance is not enough, add a second rubber band or use a rubber band of greater thickness which will provide more resistance.



4) **Ball squeeze:** Place rubber ball or tennis ball in palm of hand, squeeze 25 times, repeat 3 times. If pain is reproduced squeeze a folded sponge or piece of foam.

5) **Wrist Extension/Flexion Strengthening:** *Wrist Extension.* Place 1 lb. weight in hand with palm facing downward (pronated); support forearm at the edge of a table or on your knee so that only your hand can move. Raise

wrist/hand up slowly (concentric contraction), and lower slowly (eccentric contraction).

Wrist Flexion. Place 1 lb. weight in hand with palm facing upward (supinated); support forearm at the edge of a table or on your knee so that only your hand can move. Bend wrist up slowly (concentric), and then lower slowly (eccentric) (similar to exercise above).

6) **<u>Wrist Supination/Pronation Strengthening:</u>** Grasp hammer (wrench, or some similar device) in hand with forearm supported. Rotate hand to palm down position, return to start position (hammer perpendicular to floor), rotate to palm up position, repeat. To increase or decrease resistance, by more hand farther away or closer towards the head of the hammer.

For exercises 3-6 perform 10 repetitions 3-5 times a day.

Begin with a 1 lb. weight and perform 3 sets of 10 repetitions. When this becomes easy, work up to 15 repetitions. Increase the weight only when you can complete 15 repetitions 3 times without difficulty. The axiom “No Pain No Gain” does NOT apply here.

After exercising, massage across the area of tenderness with an ice cube for about 5 minutes. You might also try filling a paper cup half-full with water and freeze; peel back portion of the paper cup to expose the ice.