

**Re-attending ED** – this is suggested if you notice any of the following- worsening pain/swelling, worsening numbness or feeling unwell/fevers with worsening elbow pain and swelling.

Further information- <https://www.versusarthritis.org/media/1339/elbow-pain-information-booklet.pdf> [https://www.csp.org.uk/system/files/documents/2018-07/6\\_tennis\\_elbow.pdf](https://www.csp.org.uk/system/files/documents/2018-07/6_tennis_elbow.pdf)

**Early Management of minor  
Elbow Injuries  
A Patient's Guide to Recovery**



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## The Elbow Joint



It is particularly helpful for stiffness and is useful before exercises - this can be achieved by taking a comfortably warm bath/shower or immersing elbow in a sink .

Use your arm as normally as possible- this is the best way of exercising your arm and will also help movement, strength, pain and function.

**Slings** – use these as instructed. This is mainly in the first few days after injury. As your symptoms ease, wean from the sling as soon as possible. When you remove your sling try to avoid holding your arm in a protective position. Allow it to hang by your side and allow it to swing during your walking .

**Optimism** – remain positive, remember most elbow injuries make a very good recovery. Anxiety and fear of movement will add to your pain levels and slow recovery.

**Further Treatment** – In some cases patients require further treatment to assist their recovery. If you are not noticing improvement by 2-3 weeks after injury liaise with your G.P. or a Chartered Physiotherapist.

The Elbow Joint is a Hinge Joint comprised of 3 bones the Humerus, the Radius and the Ulna. This joint is stabilised by ligaments which bind the bones together. Many muscles lie in the region of the elbow. The main movements of the elbow are bending and straightening. Movements of the forearm i.e. being able to turn palm upwards and downwards occur in conjunction with the elbow.

**4 - Eccentric Flexion** – this may be helpful for those who suffer from Golfers Elbow. Position the arm as mentioned in (i) this time however have palm pointing upwards above. Again start with hand and fingers pointing upwards, the weight is applied and moved in an downward position. When this position is achieved the weight is removed, the hand returns to start position and the weight is re-applied and the exercise repeated. Again the aim is build this exercise up to 3 sets of 12 repetitions (repeated once every two days).



#### Other Tips

**Self Massage** – if you have swelling in the area you can help to move this by directing it upwards towards your arm-pit. Use moisturiser/baby oil to assist the self massage.

**Ice/Heat** – in the first 24 hours after injury ice e.g. a frozen bag of peas, can help in regards pain relief. Apply through a damp towel for 20 minutes. Heat can be used from 72 hours after injury.

**Types of Elbow Injury** – the most common minor injuries to the elbow are tendon problems (**tendonopathy**). These often affect the outer aspect of the elbow and are referred to as “**Tennis Elbow**”, or affecting the inner aspect of the elbow “**Golfer’s Elbow.**” **Muscle Strains** can also affect the muscles around the elbow. This commonly occurs to the muscles around the front of the elbow (Biceps) or the back of the elbow (Triceps). **Ligament sprains** can occur following falls or awkward twists of the elbow. These tend to occur in the inner or outer aspects of the elbow. Finally **bursitis** (inflamed fat sac) can affect the point of the elbow.

**Fractures are the result of more serious injuries of the elbow. These injuries require a period of healing during which movement of the elbow is discouraged. For these injuries you will be advised by your clinician when it is safe for you to begin rehabilitation and how this can be done.**

#### Symptoms of Elbow Injury

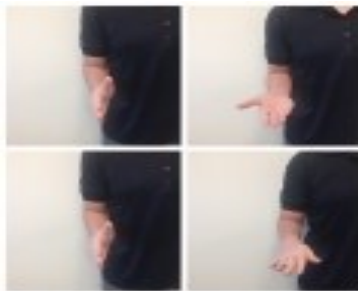
The most common symptoms following elbow injury are pain, stiffness, swelling and weakness.

**Exercises** –These should begin as pain eases usually round 72 hours after injury. Mild discomfort may be noted however severe pain should not be felt. If this is the case reduce the number and/or frequency of the exercises you are doing or stop particularly aggravating exercises. All exercises should be done 3 times daily x 5 repetitions (add 1-2 extra repetitions each time if possible).

**Exercise 1** – elbow bend and straighten - bring palm towards you and then move it away from you (try in standing, sitting and lying). As your symptoms ease try using a small weight e.g. a tin of food.



**Exercise 2** – Forearm movements – position elbow against the side of your body and turn your palm towards the ceiling and to floor.



### 3- Forearm Strengthening

**(i) Eccentric Extension** - If you suffer from Tennis Elbow this may be helpful. Rest your forearm on a table with a rolled up towel under it (palm side pointing down). Start with wrist and fingers pointing upwards – use your good hand to add a light weight to affected arm and control weight slowly downwards towards the table using only the affected side. When this downward movement has finished, remove the weight and return hand to starting position, replace weight and repeat. Aim to build this exercise up to 3 x sets of 12 exercises (repeated ONCE every 2 days).

