

TENNIS ELBOW – WHAT TO DO

1) DON'T SKIMP ON YOUR RACQUET.

- See the tennis pro and buy a racquet with your ideal grip size, ideal weight and low vibration.

Get some lessons. Common technique problems related to tennis elbow are;

- Faulty backhand ie. dropped wrist with elbow leading hand.
- Excessive forearm pronation while attempting top spin forehands.
- Excessive wrist flick during serving.
- Hitting late (getting into position slowly so that body weight is not transferred correctly and the player relies on forearm muscles exclusively for power.)

2) WARM UP / WARM DOWN.

Yeh Yeh! you say but this is crucial to preventing elbow , shoulder and wrist pain, not to mention back and calf strains.

A warm up should involve general cardiovascular for 10 minutes then general stretches 10 minutes then specific tennis stretches for 5 minutes.

The warm-up on court should be for upto 10 to 15 minutes at least. Starting slowly with ground strokes, then volley's, then serving. Ensure you only gradually build-up power in the shots.

3) REGULAR FOREARM STRENGTHENING AND STRETCHING.

You will be surprised what a difference this can make to existing tennis elbow. You must see a sports physio for the correct combination of muscular and neural stretches and a resistance training progression that is individualised to suit you. This does not mean going to a gym but an exercise program that can be done in your own lounge room!

4) BE REALISTIC

Are you overplaying with inadequate time, for the poor ECRB elbow tendon to recover, you need days off.

5) NEVER PLAY WITH WET / HEAVY OR FLAT BALLS.

Don't overhit i.e. into the wind. If using a new racquet gradually get used to it by shorter practice sessions at first.

6) COUNTER FORCE BRACES CAN BE HELPFUL IN MOST CASES.

7) IF YOU ARE DOING ALL THE THINGS RIGHT AND PAIN PERSISTS THEN YOU SHOULD SEE A SPORTS PHYSIO.

Often you will require a combination of

- 1) Rest , ice , ultrasound.
- 2) Soft tissue therapy
- 3) Anti-inflammatory gel.
- 4) Sometimes even acupuncture can help.
- 5) Last resort can be a corticosteroid injection.

Before returning to tennis a graduated strengthening program is needed and you must correct those things mentioned above or you'll be back to square one very quickly.