

Adam Seidl, MD
Associate Professor
Shoulder/Elbow Surgery
Department of Orthopedics
University of Colorado



Orthopedics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Highlands Ranch Hospital
(720) 516-4090
Inverness
(303) 694-3333
Anschutz Medical Campus
(720) 848-1900

Therapeutic Exercise Program for Epicondylitis

Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis)

Golfer's Elbow (Medial Epicondylitis)

Link to website for exercises and videos:

<https://www.denvershouldersurgeon.com/therapeutic-exercise-for-epicondylitis.html>

Theraband Flexbar available on Amazon: Green - medium; Red - light

Both tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) and golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis) are painful conditions caused by overuse. Over time, the forearm muscles and tendons become damaged from repeating the same motions again and again. This leads to pain and tenderness around the elbow.

Purpose of Program

Specific exercises to stretch and strengthen the muscles attached to the injured tendon will help with the healing process. The early goal of a therapeutic exercise program is to promote muscle endurance and improve resistance to repetitive stress.

Following a well-structured conditioning program will help you return to daily activities, as well as sports and other recreational pastimes.

Length of program: This exercise program for epicondylitis should be continued for 6 to 12 weeks, unless otherwise specified by your doctor or physical therapist. After your recovery, your doctor or physical therapist can instruct you in how these exercises can be continued as a maintenance program for lifelong protection and health of your elbows.

Do not ignore pain: You should not feel pain during an exercise; however, some degree of discomfort is normal. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist if you have any pain while completing this program.

Ask questions: If you are not sure how to do an exercise, or how often to do it, contact your doctor or physical therapist.



Adam Seidl, MD
Associate Professor
Shoulder/Elbow Surgery
Department of Orthopedics
University of Colorado



Orthopedics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Highlands Ranch Hospital
(720) 516-4090
Inverness
(303) 694-3333
Anschutz Medical Campus
(720) 848-1900

1. Wrist Extension Stretch

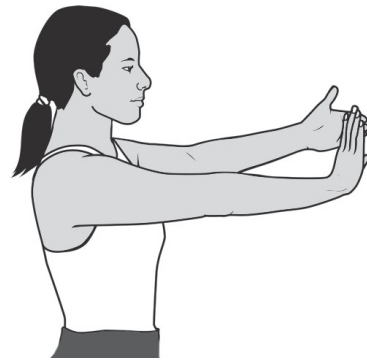
Equipment needed: None

Additional instructions: This stretch should be done throughout the day, especially before activity.

After recovery, this stretch should be included as part of a warm-up to activities that involve gripping, such as gardening, tennis, and golf.

Step-by-step directions

- Straighten your arm and bend your wrist back as if signaling someone to “stop.”
- Use your opposite hand to apply gentle pressure across the palm and pull it toward you until you feel a stretch on the inside of your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.



Repetitions

5 reps, 4x a day

Days per week

5 to 7

Tip Do not lock your elbow.

2. Wrist Flexion Stretch

Equipment needed: None

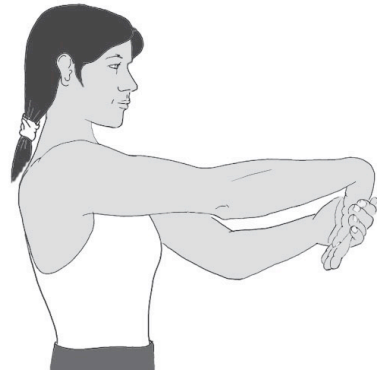
Additional instructions: This stretch should be done throughout the day, especially before activity.

After recovery, this stretch should be included as part of a warm-up to activities that involve gripping, such as gardening, tennis, and golf.

Step-by-step directions

- Straighten your arm with your palm facing down and bend your wrist so that your fingers point down.
- Gently pull your hand toward your body until you feel a stretch on the outside of your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.

Tip Do not lock your elbow.



Repetitions

5 reps, 4x a day

Days per week

5 to 7

Adam Seidl, MD
Associate Professor
Shoulder/Elbow Surgery
Department of Orthopedics
University of Colorado



Orthopedics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Highlands Ranch Hospital
(720) 516-4090
Inverness
(303) 694-3333
Anschutz Medical Campus
(720) 848-1900

3. Wrist Extension (Strengthening)

Equipment needed: Dumbbell hand weights (1 lb., 2 lbs., 3 lbs.)

Additional instructions: This exercise should be performed in stages. Begin each stage with no weight. When you are able to complete 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days with no increase in pain, move forward in the program by increasing weight (begin with 1lb., advance to 2 lbs., end with 3 lbs.).

Stage 1: Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and support your forearm on a table with your wrist placed at the edge.

Stage 2: Straighten your elbow slightly. Continue to support your arm on the table.

Stage 3: Fully straighten your elbow and lift your arm so that it is no longer supported by the table.

Step-by-step directions to be followed for each stage

- With palm down, bend your wrist up as far as possible.
- Hold up for 1 count, then slowly lower 3 counts.
- Begin without using a weight and increase the repetitions until you can complete 30.
- When you can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain, begin performing the exercise using a 1 lb. weight.
- Follow the same steps above to continue to increase repetitions and weight until you are using a 3 lb. weight and can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain.

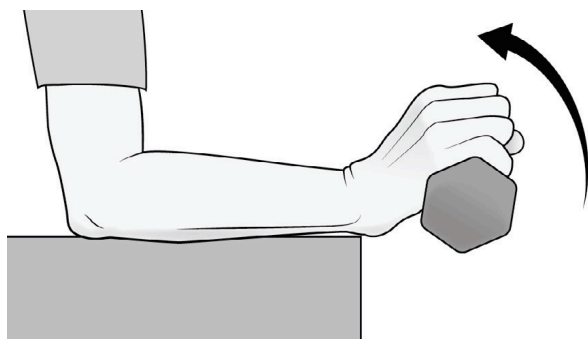
Repetitions

30 reps, 1x a day

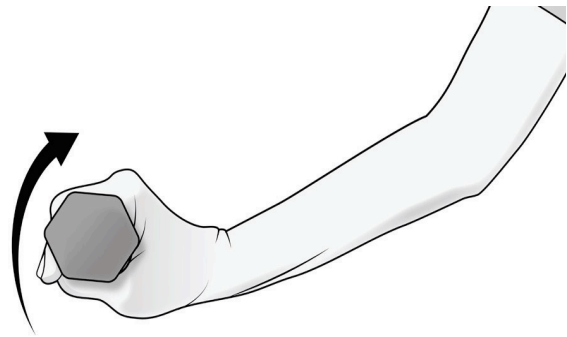
Days per week

5 to 7

Tip Do not let the weight pull your hand down too quickly.



Stage 1 using 1 lb. weight



Stage 3 using 1 lb. weight

Adam Seidl, MD
Associate Professor
Shoulder/Elbow Surgery
Department of Orthopedics
University of Colorado



Orthopedics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Highlands Ranch Hospital
(720) 516-4090
Inverness
(303) 694-3333
Anschutz Medical Campus
(720) 848-1900

4. Wrist Flexion (Strengthening)

Equipment needed: Dumbbell hand weights (1 lb., 2 lbs., 3 lbs.)

Additional instructions: This exercise should be performed in stages. Begin each stage with no weight. When you are able to complete 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days with no increase in pain, move forward in the program by increasing weight (begin with 1lb., advance to 2 lbs., end with 3 lbs.).

Stage 1: Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and support your forearm on a table with your wrist placed at the edge.

Stage 2: Straighten your elbow slightly. Continue to support your arm on the table.

Stage 3: Fully straighten your elbow and lift your arm so that it is no longer supported by the table.

Step-by-step directions to be followed for each stage

- With palm up, bend your wrist up as far as possible.
- Hold up for 1 count, then slowly lower 3 counts.
- Begin without using a weight and increase the repetitions until you can complete 30.
- When you can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain, begin performing the exercise using a 1 lb. weight.
- Follow the same steps above to continue to increase repetitions and weight until you are using a 3 lb. weight and can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain.

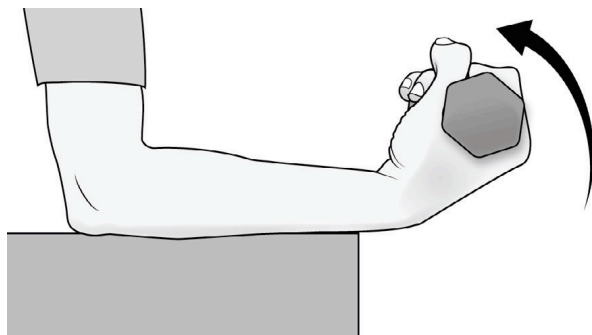
Repetitions

30 reps, 1x a day

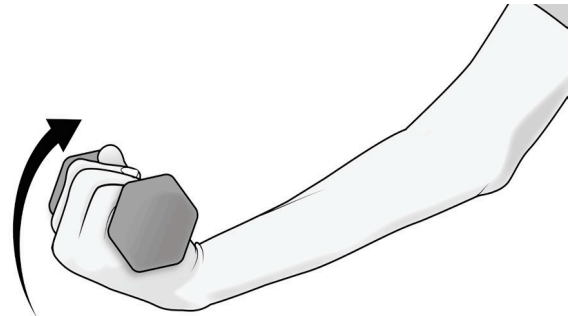
Days per week

5 to 7

Tip Do not let the weight pull your hand down too quickly.



Stage 1 using 1 lb. weight



Stage 3 using 1 lb. weight

Adam Seidl, MD
Associate Professor
Shoulder/Elbow Surgery
Department of Orthopedics
University of Colorado



Orthopedics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Highlands Ranch Hospital
(720) 516-4090
Inverness
(303) 694-3333
Anschutz Medical Campus
(720) 848-1900

5. Forearm Supination & Pronation (Strengthening)

Equipment needed: Dumbbell hand weights (1 lb., 2 lbs., 3 lbs.)

Additional instructions: This exercise should be performed in stages. Begin each stage with no weight. When you are able to complete 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days with no increase in pain, move forward in the program by increasing weight (begin with 1 lb., advance to 2 lbs., end with 3 lbs.).

Stage 1: Bend your elbow to 90 degrees and support your forearm on a table with your wrist placed at the edge.

Stage 2: Straighten your elbow slightly. Continue to support your arm on the table.

Stage 3: Fully straighten your elbow and lift your arm so that it is no longer supported by the table.

Step-by-step directions to be followed for each stage

- Begin with palm facing the side. Slowly turn the palm facing up.
- Slowly return to the start position, then slowly turn the palm down.
- Slowly return to start position. This completes one repetition.
- Begin without using a weight and increase the repetitions until you can complete 30.
- When you can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain, begin performing the exercise using a 1 lb. weight.
- Follow the same steps above to continue to increase repetitions and weight until you are using a 3 lb. weight and can perform 30 repetitions on 2 consecutive days without increasing pain.

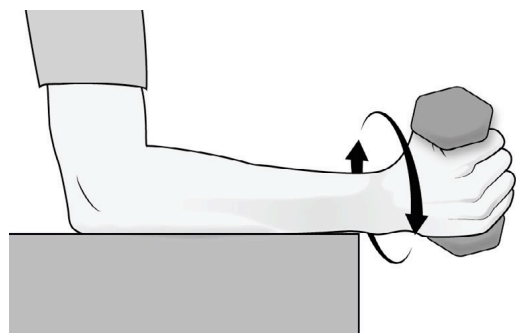
Repetitions

30 reps, 1x a day

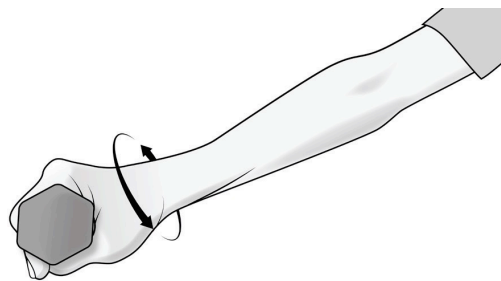
Days per week

5 to 7

Tip When using a dumbbell, try to let the weight pull your forearm in either direction as far as possible.



Stage 1 using 1 lb. weight



Stage 3 using 1 lb. weight

Adam Seidl, MD
Associate Professor
Shoulder/Elbow Surgery
Department of Orthopedics
University of Colorado



Orthopedics
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Highlands Ranch Hospital
(720) 516-4090
Inverness
(303) 694-3333
Anschutz Medical Campus
(720) 848-1900

6. *Stress Ball Squeeze*

Equipment needed: Rubber stress ball

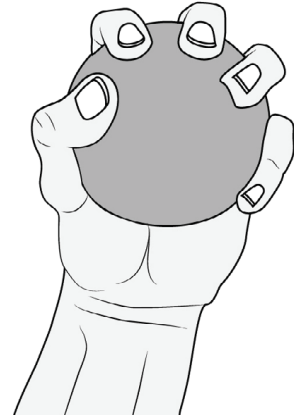
Additional instructions: This exercise should be performed after completing the above staged strengthening exercises. Your arm and elbow position for this exercise should match the stage you are completing.

Repetitions

10 reps, 1x a day

Days per week

5 to 7



7. *Finger Stretch*

Equipment needed: Elastic band

Additional instructions: This exercise should be performed after completing the above staged strengthening exercises. Your arm and elbow position for this exercise should match the stage you are completing.

Repetitions

10 reps, 1x a day

Days per week

5 to 7

