

Elbow pain is a common issue that can hinder your daily activities. Less than 10% of people will experience elbow pain in their lifetime, with 75% of people having the pain occur in their dominant arm. It can result from various causes, including overuse, injuries, or underlying medical conditions. This handout aims to provide you with essential information about elbow pain and how to effectively manage it.

Types of Elbow Pain:

- Tennis Elbow (Lateral Epicondylitis): Pain on the outer part of the elbow, often due to repetitive wrist and forearm movements.
- Golfer's Elbow (Medial Epicondylitis): Pain on the inner part of the elbow, usually caused by repetitive gripping or wrist flexion.
- Elbow Tendonitis: Inflammation of the tendons that attach to the elbow joint.
- Elbow Bursitis: Inflammation of the bursae (fluid-filled sacs) around the elbow.
- Fractures or Dislocations: Trauma or accidents can lead to elbow fractures or dislocations.
- Arthritis: Conditions like osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis can affect the elbow joint.

Common Causes of Elbow Pain:

- Overuse: Repetitive activities or sports can strain the elbow tendons and cause pain.
- Injury: Falls, direct blows, or accidents can result in elbow pain.
- Poor Technique: Incorrect form during sports or weightlifting can lead to elbow injuries.

Symptoms:

- Pain around the elbow joint
- Weakness in the forearm and hand
- Stiffness and reduced range of motion
- Swelling and tenderness

Prevention and Management:

- Rest: Give your elbow time to heal by avoiding activities that worsen the pain.
- Ice: Apply ice to reduce swelling and inflammation.
- Compression: Use a compression bandage to support the elbow.
- Elevation: Keep your elbow elevated to minimise swelling.
- Pain Medication: Over-the-counter pain relievers or prescription medications may be necessary.
- Ergonomics: Maintain proper form during activities and work to prevent strain.
- Equipment Check: Ensure that sports equipment is properly fitted and suitable for your activity.
- Bracing: A brace or splint may provide additional support during healing.

When to Seek Professional Help:

If you experience any of the following, it is recommended to consult a healthcare professional:

- Severe or persistent pain
- Inability to move the elbow
- Signs of infection (redness, warmth, fever)
- Weakness or numbness in the arm

Treatment Options:

- Physiotherapy: Customised exercises and techniques to improve elbow strength and mobility.
- Medications: Pain relievers, anti-inflammatories, or muscle relaxants as prescribed.
- Injections: Corticosteroid injections can reduce inflammation and pain.
- Surgery: For severe cases or if conservative treatments do not provide relief.