

Exercises for Tennis Elbow

What exercises should I do if I have tennis elbow?

If your doctor says it's okay, do the following wrist stretch, finger stretch, and grip exercises daily and the other exercises three times a week, every other day (for example, Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays). Also, repeat the downward wrist stretch at the end of your exercise program.

You can do the stretching exercises before you play sports. Don't do the strengthening exercises before you play sports because your muscles could get tired and you could get injured more easily.

It is important that you use smooth and controlled motions. Don't jerk your wrist while doing the exercises. Put ice on your elbow until it is numb after you exercise.

FINGER STRETCH WITH RUBBER BAND

Place a rubber band around your thumb and fingers, and slightly cup your hand. Gently spread your thumb and fingers apart then back together. Repeat 10 times for three sets. Do this exercise one or two times a day.

GRIP

Hold a soft object (for example, putty or a small rubber ball) in your hand and squeeze the object continuously for 10 to 15 minutes, two or three times a day.

DOWNWARD WRIST STRETCH

Hold one arm straight out in front of you, and hold the hand with the other hand. Slowly bend your wrist down (and slightly out) until you feel a stretch. Hold for 15 to 30 seconds, then relax. Repeat two or three times. Do this exercise two or three times a day.

WRIST CURL (PALM UP, PALM DOWN)

Lay your forearm flat across a table with your palm facing upward. Place a weight or exercise band across your palm for resistance. Use your other hand to pull the wrist back toward your body. Slowly (over five seconds) move the wrist back to the original position. Repeat this exercise with the palm facing downward while holding the suspended weight or exercise band. Repeat each exercise 10 times for three sets.

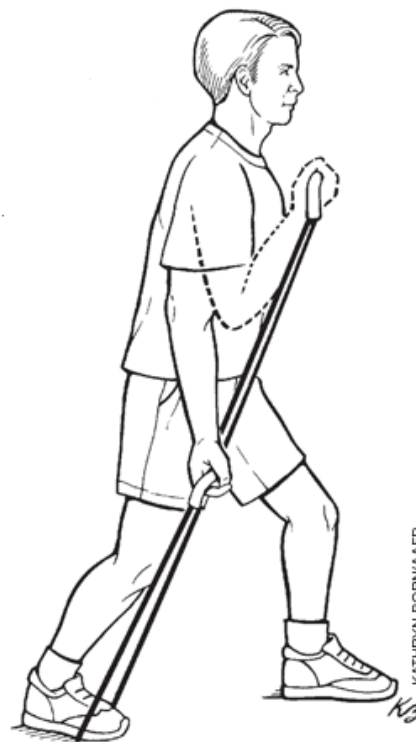
ELBOW CURLS (PALM UP, PALM DOWN)

Step out so that one foot is in front of the other. Place one end of an exercise band under your back foot, and hold the other end with your hand using one of two grips. Pull the band up with your hand, and curl your arm toward your shoulder (*see drawing 1*). You can use a dumbbell or barbell instead of an exercise band.

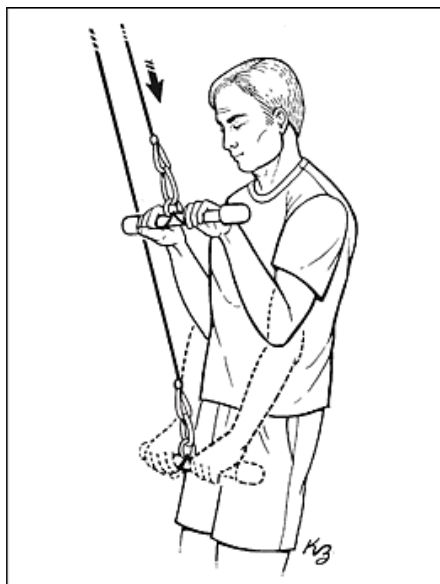
Repeat the curl exercise 10 times for three sets using both of the following grips: palm facing upward, and palm facing downward.

FOREARM PULL (OPTIONAL)

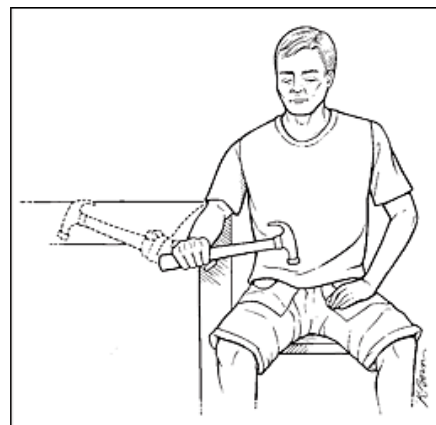
Stand with your knees slightly bent. Hold the weight bar at shoulder level with your palms down and your upper arms close to the sides of your body. Push the weight down then back up (*see drawing 2*). Repeat 10 times for three sets.



Drawing 1.



Drawing 2.



Drawing 3.

FOREARM TWIST (OPTIONAL)

Sit with your forearm supported. Hold a hammer with your palm down. Gently rotate your forearm upward then downward as far as you can before feeling pain (*See drawing 3*). If rotation is uncomfortable, move your hand closer to the hammer head. Repeat 10 times for three sets. You can use a dumbbell with a weight on one side instead of a hammer.

This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://www.familydoctor.org>.