



## Tips From the Training Room

**For more information contact the athletic training staff at Towson Sports Medicine, 410-828-4TSM (4876).**

### Tennis Elbow:

Tennis elbow is referred to as lateral epicondylitis. This is a form of tendonitis that causes pain over the lateral epicondyle of the elbow. The inflammation is attributed to micro tears of the muscle-tendon attachment caused by stresses placed on the elbow. These stresses are usually caused by repetitive activities that involve wrist and elbow movement. These muscles extend from the top of the forearm down to the wrist and are responsible for extending the wrist and fingers and turning the forearm over. This injury is normally gradual in onset and most times the patient cannot remember a specific injury. The most common stroke in tennis to cause these symptoms is the backstroke.

### Signs and Symptoms:

- Point tenderness over the lateral elbow
- Weakness and pain of the wrist muscles
- Persistent discomfort and stiffness
- Radiating pain in the arm
- Diminished grip strength

### Causes:

- Repetitive tension at the elbow causing overload on the common extensor tendon attachment
- Weak muscles or muscle imbalance
- Improper technique- excessive wrist movement
- Improper equipment- incorrect grip size and/or tight strings
- Rapid increase in activity or weights

### Treatment:

- Rest or decreased activity with the elbow and wrist
- Forearm strap or splint may be recommended
- Nonsteroidal Anti-inflammatory medications (such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin)
- Topical NSAIDs such as voltaren gel or piroxicam gel
- Ice massage
- Stretching Program
- Physician may also prescribe ultrasound or electrical stimulation to increase circulation to the area
- Strengthening Program

- Cortisone injection is an option if conservative treatment has failed
- Other treatment options may include Platelet Rich Plasm Therapy, Prolotherapy, and/or surgery
- Be sure to seek medical evaluation if problem persists

Prevention:

- Warm up before activity
- Maintain good strength and flexibility in the arm muscles and avoid repetitive motions
- Maintain proper technique
- Check your sports equipment to see if any changes need to be made
- Evaluate playing time and whether you should cut back
- Evaluate how often you weight train and the amount of weight you are lifting

Exercises:

- Gripping a ball
- Towel squeezes or wringing- place a rolled up washcloth in your hand, squeeze it or twist, hold for 10 seconds and then relax. Repeat 10 times
- Wrist flexion/extension with or without weights not to exceed 2 pounds. Support your forearm on a table with palm up and then palm down. Work your wrist slowly through a full range of motion. Repeat 10 times for 3 sets
- Supination (turning the hand in an upward direction) with or without weights not to exceed 2 pounds. Support your forearm on a table, with your thumb pointed up. Hold a weight and solely rotate your arm until your palm faces up, then return to starting position. Repeat 10 times for 3 sets
- Pronation with or without weights not to exceed 2 pounds. Support your forearm on a table, with your thumb pointed up. Hold a weight and solely rotate your arm until your palm faces down, then return to starting position. Repeat 10 times for 3 sets
- Ulnar/radial deviation with or without weights not to exceed 2 pounds. Support your forearm on a table, with your thumb pointed up. Hold a weight and lower your wrist down and then raise it up through the entire range of motion. Repeat 10 times for 3 sets

Websites:

American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine: Tennis Elbow

<http://www.sportsmed.org/secure/reveal/admin/uploads/documents/ST%20Tennis%20Elbow%2008.pdf>

United States Tennis Association

<http://www.usta.com/>