



ORTHOPAEDIC PHYSIOTHERAPY: FOR EPICONDYLITIS

A Comprehensive Approach to Epicondylitis

Epicondylitis is usually referred to as tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis) or golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis) and is quite common. This condition involves inflammation or degeneration of the tendons that attach to the bony prominences of the elbow. There are various causes of Epicondylitis but it is commonly caused by repetitive movements or overuse, particularly in sports or occupations involving gripping or wrist extension. The treatment of tennis elbow is extremely reliant on physiotherapy. At Mediplus all physiotherapy facilities for its treatment are available, helping alleviate pain, improve function and prevent recurrence.

Understanding Epicondylitis

So how does Epicondylitis occur? It usually is detected when the tendons that attach to the epicondyles (the bony bumps on either side of the elbow) become irritated or damaged. In lateral epicondylitis, the outer tendons of the elbow involved in wrist extension and gripping, are affected while in medial epicondylitis, the inner tendons that affect wrist flexion and pronation are involved. Pain, weakness and limited range of motion is the result, negatively affecting the ability to perform daily tasks or engage in sports activities.

The Role of Physiotherapy

As mentioned earlier, physiotherapy is one of the most effective treatments for this disease. The aim of physiotherapy when treating epicondylitis is to reduce pain, restore strength and flexibility and prevent the recurrence of symptoms. Several techniques are involved, and treatment is customised to the individual's specific needs. Let's take a look at the various goals of using physiotherapy:

Pain Management

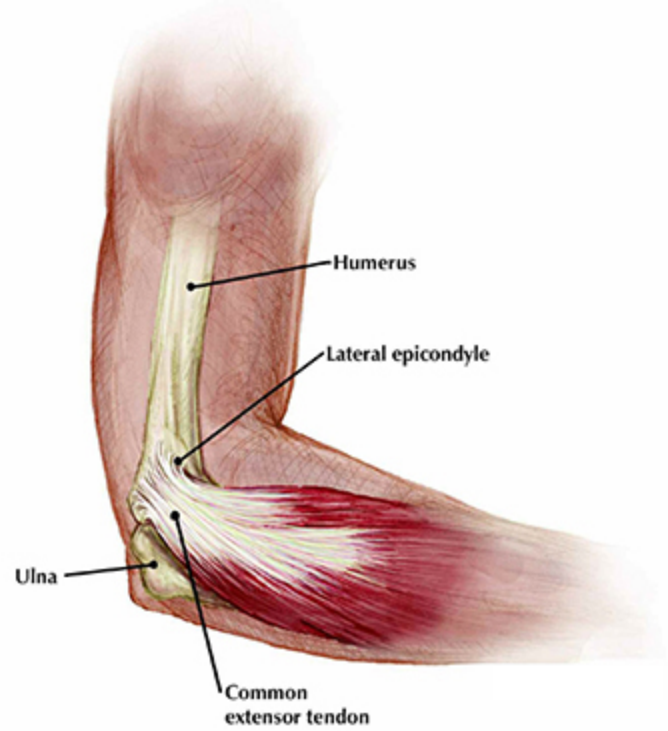
Reduction of pain is one of the primary objectives of physiotherapy. To do so, physiotherapists employ heat, cold, ultrasound and electrical stimulation in order to reduce inflammation and relieve discomfort. Ice therapy is very effective in decreasing swelling and managing acute symptoms.

Manual Therapy

Another effective intervention is Manual Therapy wherein techniques such as muscle energy technique (MET), myofascial release and joint mobilisation help decrease muscle tension, improve blood flow and reduce stiffness in the affected area. Tissue healing is also promoted by increasing the range of motion and improving overall joint function.

Stretching and Strengthening Exercises

Through physiotherapy the aim is also to restore muscle balance and flexibility. This is done through stretching and strengthening exercises. Stretching exercises for the forearm muscles help relieve tension and prevent further injury. Strengthening exercises, especially for the forearm, wrist and elbow muscles, address any weakness or imbalances caused by the disease. This apart is



eccentric strengthening, which involves lengthening the muscle while it is under tension, has been shown to be particularly effective for tendon healing in epicondylitis.

Ergonomic Training and Activity Modification

Physiotherapists also educate patients on how to modify their daily activities or sports techniques to avoid or minimise further strain on the elbow. These recommendations include ergonomic adjustments in work settings, alteration of grip positions or advice on more efficient techniques during sports activities. This is crucial as proper technique significantly reduces risk of recurrence.

Taping and Bracing

Taping and Bracing are extremely beneficial for patients in the early stages of recovery. Taping techniques and the use of braces or elbow straps provide support to the affected tendons, reduce strain and alleviate pain during activities.

Long-Term Prevention

Physiotherapy is not just about short-term relief, it is equally effective for long term prevention. Once pain and inflammation have been contained, physiotherapists recommend specific strategies to prevent the recurrence of epicondylitis like ongoing stretching and strengthening exercises, ergonomic adjustments and education on proper biomechanics.

Accelerating recovery

Essential for individuals to regain function and reduce pain, orthopaedic physiotherapy relies on a personalised approach that includes pain management, manual therapy, strengthening exercises and lifestyle modifications. It is no exaggeration that physiotherapy can significantly improve recovery outcomes and prevent future episodes of epicondylitis by addressing the underlying causes and promoting proper movement patterns.