

Practical Preventable Medicine



TENNIS ELBOW WHEN YOU DON'T EVEN PLAY TENNIS.

If you never play tennis and yet you are told that your intensely sore elbow is tennis elbow. So what exactly is it? Tennis elbow or Lateral Epicondylitis is inflammation of the extensor tendons that attach from your finger when you stretch them out to the elbow tip. An attachment that is shared by a few tendons so that the body's ability to clear the inflammation is difficult. The initial injury usually occurs when a prolonged period of repetitive work is done that usually involves an acute jolt, like digging into hard dirt or concrete, such as chipping hard surfaces with a chisel and hammer...or tennis. Once it sets in it can be progressive unless treated promptly, and can even cause muscle wasting of the forearm and affect even the ability to pick up a cup.

Western medical treatments include anti-inflammatory drugs that block the inflammation response and can be effective in the short term, as can steroid injections that block the immune response temporarily and in some cases allow time to heal. However if the problem becomes long term both of these have significant side effects and are not recommended in chronic conditions.

Clinical trials done on this condition have shown that Acupuncture to be the most effective treatment. One double blind trial at Hubei Hanjing Hospital showed total resolution in 90% of patients when using Acupuncture and Tens machine that puts a light electrical pulse through the needles. The treatment is then usually followed up with herbs that relax and nourish the tendons, while reducing inflammation. Also follow up by applying a good ligament to assist with pain and healing, that includes herbs such as eucalyptus oil, peppermint oil etc. much better than an anti-inflammatory cream which blocks the immune system but does not assist in healing.

Most importantly don't let this condition go without treatment as the longer it lingers, that more it seems to 'set in' and become quite stubborn to deal with.

Until next time

Stay well
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