

Elbow Sprain

An elbow sprain is a tearing or stretching of a ligament or ligaments around the elbow. The ligaments are a strong band of tissue that crosses the elbow joint connecting bone to bone, and allowing stability of the elbow.

Elbow Sprain Anatomy

Three bones joint together to complete the elbow joint. The bone in the upper part of the arm is referred to as the humerus. Two bones from the forearm come together to make up the lower elbow part of the arm. All of the bones have a distinct shape. Ligaments that are connected to the bones work to keep everything in proper alignment. There are two main ligaments, the medial collateral ligament, and the lateral collateral ligament.

The elbow is a ball-and-socket joint and hinge joint and a hinge joint. As the muscles relax and contract, two distinct motions occur in the elbow. Bending happens through the hinge joint that lets the elbow straighten and bend, which is known as extension and flexion. Rotation happens from the ball-and-socket joint allowing the hand to rotate the palm down and up, which is known as supination and pronation.

Elbow sprain normally results from trauma, or injury. For example, a sport injury where the elbow gets forcibly pulled into a particular direction can cause it. Contact sports such as rugby, gymnastics and hockey are common for elbow injuries such as these. One of the most common sporting movement is a baseball pitch at high velocity can cause a sprain to the collateral ligament. It is very unlikely to injure an elbow ligament without some kind of trauma.

How to Treat an Elbow Sprain:

1. Elbow Support

An elbow sleeve, arm sling or forearm wrap can provide your arm with the rest it needs to heal properly. By resting the arm, you are relieving stress on the forearm muscles and protecting the joints during any activity. Wearing a counterforce brace can be helpful for symptoms associated with tennis elbow.

2. Massage

Rub or gently massage the area to help alleviate pain and encourage blood flow. Avoid massaging the injured area if you find that it causes you more pain, and only do this under the guidance of your rehabmypatient therapist.

3. Minimize Swelling

For the first few days after the injury, avoid anything that can increase the swelling in the area. Move the elbow only gently, and without load (i.e. no carrying heavy items or bags). Ice can also help to reduce swelling.



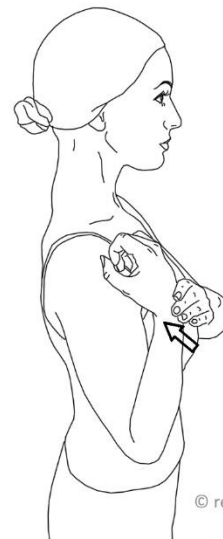
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4. Gentle Exercise

From 48 to 72 hours after the injury when the swelling is gone, begin a gentle exercise program and apply heat to the area to maintain flexibility and restore movement. Some professionals will recommend switching between hot and cold treatments to restore the function of the elbow.

5. Therapy

Manual therapists are able to treat ligament sprains effectively with techniques such as massage, and electrotherapy (e.g. ultrasound, LASER or others).



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Tips:

- For those who engage in gymnastics and baseball, an elbow sprain tends to be quite common.
- Poor balance can lead to an individual falling down on the elbow and spraining it.
- Loose joints or a disorder affecting the connective tissues are all reasons why an elbow sprain can occur.
- Improper flexibility and strength in the ligaments and muscles make an injury to the elbow more likely than those who have muscle strength.
- Poor coordination could mean the difference between an individual falling down and bumping their elbow into something forcefully.
- A strong blow to the elbow could leave you with a sprain.
- Seek a good sports therapist to help you recover from your sports injury or elbow sprain.