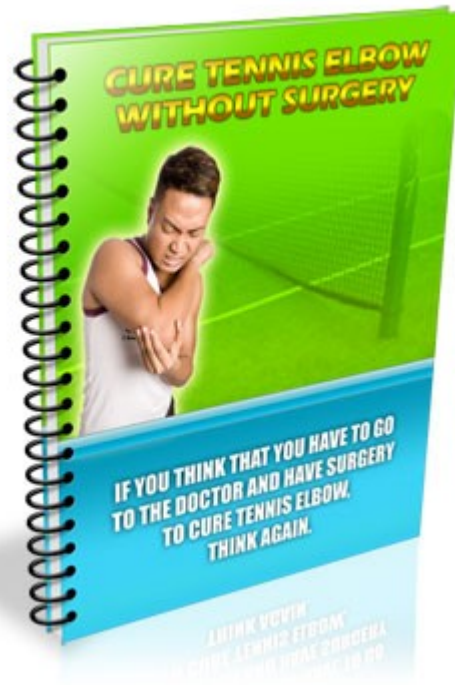


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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction	4
Chapter 2 – Symptoms Of Tennis Elbow	6
Chapter 3 – Diagnosis Of Tennis Elbow	13
Chapter 4 – Treatment Techniques For Tennis Elbow Before Rehab	15
Chapter 5 – Rehabilitation For Tennis Elbow	24
Chapter 6 – Preventing Relapse After Being Cured	34
Chapter 7 – Prevention Of Tennis Elbow	39

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Brett was on the all star tennis team in high school with a tennis scholarship waiting for him when it happened to him. Don was a 42 year old city worker who used a jackhammer all of the time for work when it happened to him. Joan was a 30 year old enthusiastic racquetball player when it happened to her. Jim was a 70 year old retiree who enjoyed a golf game more than anything else when it happened to him. Doris was a 35 year old assembly plant worker when it happened to her.

All of these folks live in different parts of the United States. They all come from different background, are of different races and religions. But they all have one thing in common. They all suffer from tennis elbow.

Did you think that tennis elbow only affects tennis players? Think again. This often agonizing condition affects just about anyone who performs repeated movements with their forearms, elbows and wrists. Although the condition is called "tennis elbow," it really only accounts for about 5 percent of all cases. Anyone who repeatedly uses their arms in the course of a day or in their favorite activity is prone to tennis elbow.

The good news is that despite what you may have heard in the past, you do not have to give up doing your job or favorite activity if you start experiencing the symptoms of tennis elbow. As long as you come up with a comprehensive plan of how to take care of the condition, you can continue to go about your business.

Surgery is also something that you do not normally need with regard to tennis elbow. Contrary to popular opinion, rest and/or surgery is not needed for the condition of tennis elbow, that affects millions of Americans each year. You can be treated for tennis elbow while still enjoying your normal activities and working.

Tennis elbow affects people of all ages and in all occupations. It can be very painful and does require a doctor with regard to treatment. A good doctor will be able to treat you for tennis elbow by using a non surgical treatment plan.

You can cure tennis elbow with the help of a good sports medicine doctor without surgery and without taking pills that may end up making you feel like a zombie. The trick is to know the symptoms, get the diagnosis and then work with your doctor to come up with a plan to treat this painful but common condition.

Chapter 2 - Symptoms of Tennis Elbow

Tennis elbow can have various symptoms, all of which involve tenderness or pain in the elbow region. Some of the symptoms of tennis elbow include:

Pain or tenderness on the bony part of your elbow

This is one of the most common symptoms of tennis elbow, although it does not automatically mean that you have the condition. Tennis elbow symptoms also mirror other types of symptoms and this type of pain can also be caused by a contusion. If the pain persists for no known cause, it is possible that you may be suffering from tennis elbow.

If you hit your elbow and it is black and blue in this area, chances are that you are suffering from a contusion. However, if the black and blue area does not go away in a week, or if the pain does not subside, you should see a doctor. It is also important to note that not all contusions cause a black and blue mark or swelling.

Pain when holding an object or squeezing and object

The pain will become worse the more you hold the object or squeeze the object. For example, if you are holding a golf club and you find the pain shooting into your elbow that gradually become worse each time, you have a good chance of having Tennis Elbow. Again, you will want to see if this is a one time occurrence, or if it continues to happen. If you continue to get the pain, you will want to look into some sort of diagnosis.

You may notice the pain when you are trying to open up a jar or even turning a doorknob. Take note of the pain that you have and how often it occurs.

Soreness or pain that radiates from the forearm when bending the wrist

A lot of people confuse Tennis Elbow with carpal tunnel syndrome - they are two distinct syndromes. The pain that is associated with Tennis Elbow is more of an ache rather than a shooting pain, although it will get progressively worse over time if you choose to ignore it. This is why it is so important to take care of this pain as soon as possible.

Weak grip in your hands when shaking hands or turning a door knob

Many people who have Tennis Elbow really notice it when they find that they have such a weak grip that they cannot properly turn a door knob. This often prompts a trip to the doctor for a diagnosis. Again, Tennis Elbow symptoms can mirror other, more serious symptoms such as MS, this is why a diagnosis is so important.

Pain in arm when wrist is extended

Another common symptom and one that the sufferer often compensates for by slightly bending his or her wrist all the time.

The person who has this symptom may find that their arm does not hurt if they bend it slightly so they gradually begin keeping their arms from being extended. This only temporarily relieves the pain.

All of those who we talked about in the first part of this book had one or more of these symptoms. While they are painful, they are not usually something that forces someone to rush to the doctor. Of all the people in our study, all of whom sought different treatment, the only one who came to the doctor right away was Brett, the tennis star. That was because the pain was affecting his game that meant so much to him. Brett was devastated to learn that he had Tennis Elbow, but was happy to realize that it did not require surgery, and that he could be treated with a 6 week program and be good as new. All that time, still able to play tennis.

The others all came to the doctor at different intervals. Some came after they tried other methods of treatment, some after getting the wrong diagnosis and others after they were told that they would need surgery.

While most people will not rush off to the doctor the minute they get a pain in their elbow, if you do repetitive movements with your arms and elbows, you should be aware of the symptoms of Tennis Elbow and what to look for. This is one syndrome that should not scare you as 90 percent of cases are cured within 6 weeks after physical therapy treatment and will not impede your life.

On the flip side, if you experience the following symptoms, they

may not be caused by tennis elbow but by a more serious condition that requires immediate medical intervention. These symptoms include:

Pain that wakes you from your sleep. Tennis Elbow, while painful, rarely wakes you up. Any pain that awakens you from your sleep should be examined by a medical professional. Pain is your body's way of telling you that something is wrong. When pain awakens you, it is time to go to the doctor.

Pain that continues for more than a week. This can be Tennis Elbow as well as other types of pain. Any pain that persists is something that you should talk to your doctor about. This is especially true if the pain gets continually worse.

Bruising in the area. This is an indication that you can have a contusion or a fracture in the arm. This should be looked at by the doctor. Any bruising or swelling can indicate a contusion (which is really just what happens when you badly bang your arm) or a fracture. When you bang your arm, you will get a black and blue mark. But if the swelling does not go down after a day and remains discolored, see your doctor.

Unable to bend your wrist without pain. This can be indicative of a more serious condition or even a broken wrist. Some people experience fractures without even realizing that there is something wrong. You should talk to your doctor if you cannot bend your wrist, hand or arm without experiencing pain.

Losing your grip on doorknobs, dropping things, etc. This can also

be indicative of a more serious illness or syndrome and should not be ignored. Talk to your doctor about this. While we all drop things occasionally and lose our grip, if it is happening repeatedly to you, it can be indicative of carpal tunnel syndrome or another condition.

If you want to cure tennis elbow, the trick is to recognize the symptoms and not ignore them. Too often, we ignore symptoms of syndromes and illnesses and wish that they would "go away." While we do not want to be running to the doctor for every type of problem that we have, when a problem persists and does not appear to be getting any better, it is time to talk to a doctor.

Likewise if you have symptoms of a problem that is interfering with your life. Jim, the golfer that we discussed earlier in this book, was experiencing his symptoms of tennis elbow for nearly a year before he sought help. He used aspirin to relieve the pain, but wasn't really enjoying his golf game. After treatment, he is now able to enjoy the one thing in life that he loves the most (but don't tell Jim's wife that) , which is the game of golf.

The point is that while you should not be an alarmist and rush to the doctor each time you experience a twinge in your arm, if you play tennis, golf, operate machinery or use your arms in a repetitive fashion on a daily basis, you are at a risk of developing tennis elbow. It is not a serious condition - nothing to be scared about. And by taking steps to cure the syndrome before it becomes too painful, you are being proactive about your health and will enjoy a better quality of life.

Only a doctor can diagnose tennis elbow. Although you may have the symptoms and may enjoy diagnosing yourself on the internet, if you feel that you have tennis elbow, you should talk to your doctor and get a good diagnosis.

When seeking a doctor for a diagnosis of a case of suspected tennis elbow, you should look for one who specializes in sports medicine. You do not need an orthopedic surgeon to make this diagnosis, a family practitioner who is well versed in sports medicine will be able to help not only diagnose tennis elbow, but also help you cure the syndrome.

Things To Tell The Doctor

If you start experiencing the symptoms of tennis elbow, you should take note of when they began, if they are getting any worse over a period of time, what type of symptoms that you have, how the pain radiates and if you are losing your grip on doorknobs, sporting equipment, etc.

If you have other symptoms, you should make note of them as well. This would include frequent headaches, a feeling of numbness in your hands or arms, forgetfulness or loss of sensation in any part of your body. The doctor will ask you a series of questions, so you should write down any symptoms that you have to make answering easier.

Tennis elbow is not crippling and get life threatening out of your mind. But it can interfere with your life. Continue reading so that you can learn more about how you can treat this very common

condition.

Chapter 3 - Diagnosis Of Tennis Elbow

Only a doctor can diagnose tennis elbow. Trying to diagnose this syndrome yourself is a waste of time. The technical name for tennis elbow is Epicondylitis. It is usually diagnosed upon your first visit to your doctor upon a simple physical exam of the arm and elbow area.

Your doctor will ask you questions about your condition in order to make a diagnosis and will also examine your arm, stretching it and asking you where it hurts. Very rarely will a doctor order x-rays or blood work, although he or she may err on the side of safety if they feel that you might be suffering from a fracture or other condition. In most cases, however, the doctor will simply want to know the following:

- ÿ When did you first notice the condition and the pain?
- ÿ How does the pain radiate? You should be able to tell the doctor where the pain begins and ends.
- ÿ Does the pain keep you up at night?
- ÿ What have you been doing to alleviate the pain?
- ÿ What type of job or activity do you do on a regular basis?
- ÿ Do you have any other pain or conditions that are of concern?

The doctor may test your grip and will then, after a careful examination, make a diagnosis of tennis elbow.

The reason why it is so important that you go to a doctor who is well versed in sports medicine is that they see a lot of cases of tennis elbow and can make a quicker diagnosis. Remember Doris

who we talked about in the first chapter? She went to her gynecologist and complained about her elbow. He then ordered blood work and an x-ray of her arm - both of which came back without incident. Had she gone to a doctor who specialized in sports medicine, she could have saved a lot of time and money.

Once the diagnosis is made with regard to tennis elbow, you should then begin a treatment plan with your doctor. If your doctor also treats tennis elbow with a specialized treatment plan, you can then begin treatment right away. Your doctor may decide to send you to a physical therapist or a doctor who treats this condition. You are better off to seek a doctor who specializes in sports medicine for the treatment of tennis elbow. The reason for this is that this condition is far from being obscure. In fact, it is very common, affecting about 10 million people a year in the United States alone. Because it is considered a sports injury (although not always related to sports) it is best treated by a doctor who specializes in the area of medicine known as sports medicine.

You have to get a firm diagnosis from your doctor before you can start treating tennis elbow with a physical therapist or a sports medicine doctor. However, getting a diagnosis is as easy as a doctor visit. Even if you do not have insurance, you should be able to get the diagnosis for the cost of a single office visit. You should not have to worry about getting an MRI or costly X-rays. If you suspect that you have tennis elbow, you should consider seeking a diagnosis from a sports medicine doctor.

Chapter 4 - Treatment Techniques For Tennis Elbow To Minimize Damage

Once the doctor has told you that you have tennis elbow, your first thought will naturally be, "I won't be able to play tennis, golf, work, etc." Not true. While rehabilitation is something that you will want to consider in the future, you can still work, play tennis or golf with the use of proper techniques. Using these techniques will then alleviate the pain from tennis elbow and may even arrest it. Once you are pain free, you can then undergo a rehabilitation process that will cure the condition for good.

Most doctors will tell you that you should "rest" in order to cure the tennis elbow which is caused by tears in the elbow tendon. That is what tennis elbow is - a tear in the tendon. These are often caused by overuse of the tendon and, in some cases, improper use.

While rest can heal the overused tendon and cure the problem, it is not always the practical solution. If you need to work, or need to play a sport, you cannot always take time off.

Consider the case of Brett. He was counting on a scholarship for tennis so that he could go to college. He couldn't very well stop playing tennis. There are those who cannot stop working, either, because they do not have insurance or an employer who will pay for rehabilitation. Many people who are self employed are forced to continue working so that they can provide for their families. Social security disability is very difficult to get and you have to be unable to work for a year. This is not the case with tennis elbow, so staying out of work if you are self employed may not be the

option.

Brett had a scholarship waiting in the wings for him if he completed his tennis season. But he came down with tennis elbow. Fortunately for Brett, he has a doctor who specializes in sports medicine and who knew how to treat him so that he could finish out the season and then go in for a full rehab after the season was over. Thanks to the advice of that doctor and the techniques used (that are described in this book) Brett was able to finish the tennis season and get his scholarship.

A professional golfer or tennis player may find that it is not feasible to stop their game. They may be scheduled for a tournament that they have to play in for the sake of their careers. But this does not mean that they have to endure tremendous pain in order to play the game. There are techniques that can be used before, during and after the games that can alleviate the pain and allow you to continue to play, even if you are suffering from tennis elbow.

Pre Game Techniques

Before any games, you should take some sort of anti-inflammatory drug such as an ibuprofen or naproxen. NSAIDs will help alleviate some of the pain and will enable you to perform better when you are playing the game.

The use of these drugs on a long term basis have been linked to problems with the digestive system. You should never rely on NSAIDs for a long period of time as they can cause ulcers and

other stomach problems. Taking a couple of Tylenol, however, prior to a tennis match or a golf game is more than fine. Just don't get used to taking them on a long term basis.

In addition to the over the counter pain relievers, you should also do some stretching of your arms before the match. This includes basic stretching of the biceps, triceps, shoulders and forearms before you start to play. Actually, this should be a matter of course when you play tennis or any other sport. Many sports injuries are due to the fact that you do not limber up and properly stretch before a match. Even if you do not suffer from tennis elbow, you should still stretch these muscles before a game or match.

Do not neglect your legs, either. Although you may not feel any pain in your legs and you are worried about your tennis elbow, you can do yourself a favor and give your legs a good stretching out.

In order to maintain proper circulation in your arms during the game, keep them warm as you warm up using stretching techniques. This can be done with a series of arm warmers. Remember leg warmers that were used by dancers and other athletes at one time (and oddly enough became a fashion statement in gyms during the 1980s?) Well, they had a purpose. They kept the legs warm during exercise and improved circulation. You should do the same for your arms. Although you will not be wearing arm warmers during your tennis match, you should be wearing them while you limber up.

Techniques To Use During Matches Or Games

When you are actually playing the game, you are going to want to use a counterforce elastic band that will relieve the pain from your elbow. This works for many people who suffer from tennis elbow. This was what Brett used and it helped him win matches. You can get this band at sporting goods shops or even online.

Take a look at your racquet and how you hold it. Do you grip the racquet too tightly? How heavy is the racquet? Remember Joan, the racquetball player who came down with tennis elbow? She was using a racquet that was too heavy and not even gripping it properly. Joan never had any lessons with regard to tennis or racquetball, so she didn't know about tennis elbow or the right way to hold the racquet. If you loosen up on the racquet and use one that is lighter weight, it will help with the tennis elbow symptoms and enable the pain to subside in many cases. If you find that you are suffering from this syndrome, take a look at the type of racquet that you are using and change it to a lighter weight racquet.

You should use warming bands around your elbows while you are playing as well as wrist bands. The warmer you keep your tendons while you are playing the sport, the less you will aggravate your condition. You can get wristbands and elbow bands in just about any store that sells sporting goods. You have most likely seen people wearing these. They are not doing this just to endorse a product - they are wearing these bands to keep their tendons and muscles warm and in good operating condition.

After The Game Techniques To Heal

After the game, you will want to recover from the exercise. Sure, you might want to rush out and celebrate, but in order to take care of your condition and make sure that you can continue to keep playing for the next match, you will want to use what is called the "PRICE" method of healing. This is an anagram for protection, rest, ice, compression and elevation.

Protecting the arm

Now is the time to protect the arm from any sort of activity that will aggravate the painful condition. You do not need to bandage it up or put it in a sling - that is going to the extreme. But you will want to rest it instead of doing something that will aggravate the condition and has nothing to do with your work or game.

Remember when we talked about Don, the city worker who used a jackhammer all of the time? His doctor told him that he had tennis elbow and advised him to rest his arm after he was done with work in order to cure it. He talked to him about the PRICE method. And what do you think that Don did? He decided to go play pool after work each night. Needless to say that this only made his condition worse.

Protect the arm from further injury so that you can continue to enjoy the activities that you either play for enjoyment or do for a living.

Resting the arm

Give your arm some time to rest. As a matter of fact, give all of your muscles some time to rest after a big match. You just gave them a big workout - now is the time to rest them and allow them to heal. Resting the arm is necessary after a tennis game. This does not mean that you have to take a nap, but it means that you should pay attention to your body and your arm and give it the proper rest that it deserves.

Avoid any strenuous activity after playing a tennis game or golf game when you have tennis elbow. This will allow the tendon to repair and will alleviate the pain that you feel.

Use ice on the arm

There is always a question of whether you should use heat or ice when you have a pain. Ice will reduce the swelling and will alleviate the pain in the case of tennis elbow. Get an icepack and keep it in the area for about a half an hour after the game. This will greatly reduce the pain in your arm. You can repeat this every three or four hours for the first two days after your game. Your arm will feel much better.

Compression

If the pain is very bad, you may want to use compression. This involves bandaging the arm with an ACE bandage and keeping it immobile. This is not usually necessary, but can work if the pain is severe. Again, you will want to keep the arm compressed for about 48 hours after you have played the tennis or golf match.

Elevation

Elevation is often recommended in severe cases of tennis elbow. Elevation involves keeping the arm immobile and elevated on a pillow or some other type of comfortable object. This is not usually recommended in minor cases of tennis elbow. In most cases, you can alleviate the pain after the game by protecting the arm, resting it and using an ice pack. You should feel as good as new after doing this and be ready to play again.

Warning:

Whenever pain strikes, many doctors are very quick to give out pain medication. Tennis elbow can be a painful condition. You may choose to take over the counter medication to alleviate the pain or you may even have a doctor who will prescribe pain medications. There are dangers to using both:

Over The Counter Pain Medications

NSAIDs, or anti-inflammatory medications are good on a short term basis. If you have a headache, backache or pain from playing a sport, you can take a couple of ibuprofen and feel better. But used on a long term basis, they can wreak havoc on the digestive tract and have even been linked to stomach cancer. They can also cause ulcers in the stomach and damage the liver. If you find that you are constantly popping over the counter pain medication, it is time to see the doctor and find alternate therapy for your pain.

Prescription Pain Medications

Some doctors hear the word "pain" and automatically whip out their prescription pads and prescribe medications for pain like Vicodin. That is what happened to Doris, the factory worker.

Doris went to the doctor and complained about the pain that she was feeling in her elbow. She had a job at a factory where she used her arms all the time in a repetitive fashion. She was in pain a good deal of the time and wanted instant relief. Her doctor prescribed Vicodin.

While most doctors have stopped prescribing Oxycontin as it became a notorious drug after radio personality Rush Limbaugh revealed that he was addicted to the drug and it, Vicodin is still widely prescribed for pain as is Tylenol with Codeine. Both of these drugs are extremely addictive and have serious long term side effects. Doris became addicted to Vicodin to the point where she felt that she needed it or face excruciating pain. And she did - the pain medications will mask the pain, but may end up making it worse after you go through withdrawal.

Pain relievers and medications are merely a mask. They do not eliminate the cause of the pain, but mask them so that you do not feel the pain. They should never be used on a long term basis to cure any sort of chronic pain. Pain medications like Vicodin are extremely addictive, to the point where people are actually forging prescriptions to obtain the medications. Over the counter pain medications can have serious side effects. You should not rely on these methods to control your pain from tennis elbow.

Instead, you should look for a way to cure the condition. In the next chapter, we will talk about rehabilitation. This worked eventually for all of those involved in our case study. But while you are awaiting rehabilitation, you can alleviate the painful condition by using the PRICE techniques to conquer the condition known as tennis elbow.

Chapter 5 - Rehabilitation For Tennis Elbow

Most people (about 90 percent of sufferers) do not need surgery to cure tennis elbow. It is very possible to cure this condition using a combination of rest, strengthening exercises as well as flexibility exercises. Rehabilitation for tennis elbow should take place as soon as you are diagnosed with the condition so that you can be cured quicker. While this is not always possible, the sooner you begin the rehabilitation process, the shorter the process will be.

Remember Brett? We have talked about the young tennis star in a few chapters. He began rehab for tennis elbow after he was finished with the tennis season at school. While he played, he used the techniques described in the previous chapter so as not to aggravate the condition. After the season and his scholarship was secured, he began rehab for tennis elbow. This lasted six weeks and he was as good as new. He had two things going for him - his youth as well as the fact that he followed proper procedure to rest his arm and not cause additional harm to the condition.

Others who went through rehab took a bit longer, although all were cured within three months of rehab. Even Jim, the 70 year old golfer, was cured from tennis elbow and back to his golf game after two months of rehab.

Before you begin rehab, you have to be pain free. You can get pain free by resting the arm. Using the techniques that were described in the last chapter can help you keep the arm rested and free from pain. Stopping the activity that you enjoy can also speed up the process of alleviating the pain. The purpose of the rest

period is to give the tendon time to heal.

Because tennis elbow is the result of a torn tendon, you have to allow the tendon to heal in order to rehabilitate your arm and allow for the full range of motion and a return to normal activity. This is not always possible. In some cases, the person suffering from tennis elbow may have to complete a project or a season of matches before they can go in for rehab. However, the sooner you begin rehab, the better off you are and the quicker that you will heal completely.

Your age and general health also has a lot to do with the success and speed of the rehab process. Naturally, those who are younger have this on their side and will generally heal quicker. But most people who go through rehabilitation for tennis elbow will be cured from the condition within two months.

In order to prepare for rehab, you first have to rest.

Resting your tennis elbow

Resting your tennis elbow does not mean that you cannot do anything with your arm. It does mean that you should avoid any repetitive motion that you may be using that will aggravate the condition. Before you can begin on a series of exercises that will cure the tennis elbow, as well as flexing exercise, you will have to make sure that your arm is free from pain.

Cold compresses work better than heat when it comes to tennis elbow. Use a cold compress on your arm once a day and wait for a

few weeks before beginning rehab. Your arm should be free from pain for several weeks before you attempt the rehab process. The length of time that you will need to rest your arm will depend on the severity of the case. This is why it is so important that you use a physical therapist to help you overcome this condition and see you through the rehab process. They will be able to instruct you on what you need to do to prepare for rehab as well as institute the rehab process.

A doctor who is well versed in sports medicine will also be able to help you with the rehab process. Rehab is not just getting back into the swing of things, so to speak. In many cases, you have to re-learn how you hold a racquet or different techniques to keep tennis elbow from stopping your game again.

Rest is important so that your tendon can be completely healed before you begin trying to use rehab exercises to strengthen the tendon. Once the tendon is healed and you are free from pain, you can then begin the second step in the rehab process.

Many people make the mistake of thinking that once they are free from pain, they do not need rehab. They feel that there is nothing wrong, the tendon is cured and it can be business as usual. They could not be more wrong. All this will do is cure it until the next time you start playing the game. Then you will inevitably suffer from the same condition again and have to go through the same painful process again. Eventually, it will take longer and longer for the tendon to heal.

Important:

It is important to note that most people who have to eventually undergo surgery to correct tennis elbow do so because they have had the condition for a long period of time and never did much about it. They took pain relievers, rested their arms and then went about their business. In some cases, they never even obtained a proper diagnosis for tennis elbow. Do not let this happen to you. If you have symptoms of tennis elbow, get a proper diagnosis and then begin rehab as soon as possible.

Exercises You Can Do At Home

When you begin rehab for your tennis elbow condition, you will not only go to a doctor or physical therapist on a periodic basis (usually once or twice a week) but you will also be given exercises to do at home so that you can get the full range of motion with your arm or arms. You will have to practice these exercises as instructed by the doctor so that you can regain the full use of your arm and elbow without incurring pain.

Before beginning your exercises, you will need to make sure that you have rested your arm for the proper amount of time and that you get the green light to begin the exercises from the doctor. Naturally, you will want to start out slowly and then gradually build up your exercises so that you regain the strength in your arm. You should practice these exercises on both arms, although the elbow in which you experience the condition of tennis elbow will most likely be the elbow that you favor. It does not hurt to strengthen both arms and protect them against any other physical strains.

Weight exercises

Lifting weights is one way that you can start to exercise your biceps. This does not mean that you lift anything heavy. You will want to start lifting small weights, such as two pound weights, at first.

You should use the weights so that you can achieve a full range of motion with your arms. There should not be any pain when you lift the weights. You are not looking to bulk up your arms but to strengthen the tendons. Lifting very light weights will enable you to strengthen the tendons without tearing them.

It cannot be stressed enough that you should start out slowly when it comes to exercises that involve the healing and cure of tennis elbow. Before you even think of using weights, you should be able to move your arm in the entire range of motion without experiencing any pain. You should not feel any different when you are lifting the weights and it should be as effortless as possible. You will only want to do eight repetitions when you start out rehab after you have completed the rest portion of this process. Eight reps is more than enough and can be completed every other day with the same size weights.

If, at any time during these exercises, you feel any sort of pain - stop. The objective of the weight exercises is to get you back into using your arms in full range of motion without feeling any pain while strengthening the muscles at the same time. Your doctor will instruct you on how to use the weights and which exercises to use in your rehab therapy. Never continue any sort of exercise if you

feel pain.

Range Of Motion Exercises

In addition to using very small weights to build up strength, you should also use range of motion exercises that will further strengthen your tendons in the elbow. Many people have a problem extending their arms fully when they have tennis elbow because of the pain in the elbow tendon. In order to get the full range of motion back into your arms, you will have to exercise so that you do extend the arm.

One exercise that you can do at home that will help is to extend the arm as far out as possible very slowly. Then bend it at the elbow very slow. Repeat this for eight reps every day. Each day, you will feel that the arm feels a lot less stiff than before.

Another range of motion exercise that you may want to try is to lift your arm over your head, again in a very slow motion, and then bring it back to your side. You should do this from the side as well as from the front of your body. This may feel stiff at first, but it will gradually loosen up and become easy to do.

Still another range of motion exercise that you can do after you have loosened up your elbow tendon is to make a circular motion with your arm. This should be the last exercise that you try and you will want to do this very slowly. You will want to move your arms forward (like you are swimming) and, when you have completed this task, move them slowly backwards.

Racquet Exercises

After you have completed the range of motion exercises and, upon the advice of your doctor, you will also want to use the racquet or golf club swings that you have been using. You will want to very lightly swing the racquet or golf club so that you get used to using it again. Your doctor will instruct you on the right way to swing these devices that cause less impact on the elbow tendon.

Gripping Exercises

Many people who suffer from tennis elbow have a pain that radiates down their arm to the point where gripping even a doorknob becomes difficult. This was the case of Joan, the racquetball enthusiast. You can strengthen the muscles and tendons in your arm by gripping a squeeze ball and releasing it. This is a good exercise for both hands and will strengthen the muscles and tendons in your hand as well as in your wrists. Your doctor may be able to give you an exercise ball that you can use to do this. After using this exercise for a period of time, you will improve your grip in your fingers and hands and they will become stronger.

When you are practicing at home exercises to treat tennis elbow, the purpose of the exercises is to strengthen the tendon in the elbow as well as those in the arm so that you do not get a relapse of tennis elbow. At home exercises should be practiced in accordance with your doctor's instructions. The exercises outlined here are just a few of those that you may be asked to perform by your rehab doctor. When used in combination with physical

therapy, they can get you back on track and keep your tendons strong and ready for action.

Physical Therapy

Physical therapy can be performed in the office of your sports medicine doctor as well as by a physical therapist. There are rehab centers located all across the United States that specialize in helping those who have suffered from sports related injuries get back into the game.

Physical therapy is not usually performed without some sort of instructions for at home exercises. The type of physical therapy as well as the length that you are in therapy for your tennis elbow will be determined by the extent of the damage to your tendon. Most people think of physical therapy as something that you undergo after you have had surgery. While those who undergo surgery for tennis elbow also have to participate in physical therapy, it is often used as the sole treatment (along with exercise) to treat tennis elbow and is very effective.

The physical therapist will use a variety of techniques that are designed to limber up the tendon and enable it to stretch without tearing. You may be required to do a series of stretching exercises and the physical therapy may also entail massage of the arm and the tendon. Again, this all depends upon the extent of the damage.

In addition to stretching the tendon and massage therapy, ice therapy as well as heating treatments may also be used in your

physical therapy process. For the most part, however, stretching the tendon without breaking is the main purpose of physical therapy.

Before you begin any at home exercises, the physical therapist will teach you the proper way to perform these exercises so that they are performed correctly and without causing further injury. They will most likely want to see you perform the exercises in the office before sending you home to practice them yourself.

Compliance on your part is key to getting better when it comes to the physical therapy part of rehab. It can be very tempting for someone to say that they feel great and that their elbow is no longer bothering them and then quit rehab before they are finished with the process. Many of those in our study had to repeat rehab because they felt that they no longer needed the physical therapy after their elbow stopped bothering them and they were able to once again enjoy their activities.

Not only will physical therapy get you back in gear when it comes to using your arm in full motion, but it is also designed to help prevent you from having a relapse. Once you have had tennis elbow, you have a greater chance of suffering a relapse, unless you modify your behavior. Thus, rehab not only teaches you the right exercises to use to strengthen your arms, but also teaches you to have greater flexibility.

By participating in both physical therapy and following your doctor's instructions with regard to your exercises, you can be cured of tennis elbow without surgery and without the need for

medication. This combination of both therapy and exercise works in 90 percent of all cases and worked for all of the people involved in our study.

Even if this is your second or third bout with tennis elbow, you do not necessarily need surgery. If you follow this treatment plan of using strengthening exercises and flexibility when it comes to the condition of tennis elbow, you will be able to recover fully from this condition within six weeks to two months.

A Word About Insurance:

If your injury is caused by your job, as was the case of Don, the city worker, you can usually get workmen's compensation to pay for your treatment and also pay you for the time that you are off work. In order to do this, you will have to file a workmen's compensation claim.

If your injury was caused by playing a certain sport such as tennis, your insurance will still most likely cover out patient physical therapy as long as it is prescribed by your doctor. This is why it is so important to visit a doctor who has knowledge with regard to sports injuries.

Chapter 6 - Preventing Relapse After Being Cured

After you have been cured from the painful condition of tennis elbow and have received the green light to go back to your normal activities, you will want to prevent yourself from suffering a relapse. This will include both equipment modifications as well as technique modifications that may have been contributory to your tennis elbow. In most cases, the reason that someone gets tennis elbow is that they are either using the wrong equipment or they are using it improperly.

If you continue with the status quo after you have recovered from tennis elbow, guess what? Chances are that you will go back to having the same problem. Fortunately, there are ways that you can diminish your chance of ever having to endure tennis elbow again.

Equipment Modifications

One way that you can reduce the risk of a relapse with tennis elbow is to modify your equipment. If, for example, you are a tennis player and have suffered from this condition, you should take a look at the racquet you are using and see if you can make some modifications that will make it easier for you to swing.

In some cases, people who suffer from tennis elbow are using heavier equipment than they need. In Joan's case, for example, she was using a racquet that was far too heavy for her. She was able to overcome tennis elbow and keep the condition away for good after she switched to a lighter racquet.

In addition to the weight of the racquet, you should also look at the string tension. What type of string are you using in your tennis racquet? Is it natural gut or is it nylon? Or is it polyurethane? If you are using a racquet with polyurethane strings, get rid of it or get it re-strung. Natural gut is the best string substance that you can use as it is the softest and gives the best flexibility. After that, you are best off using nylon or synthetic gut. If you are using a hard string that causes excessive vibration in the racquet, you may end up aggravating your tennis elbow or causing a relapse.

Also, when you are taking a look at the strings, take a look at the tension of the strings. They may be a bit too tight. While this may give you more power, it may also increase the vibration in the racquet. You might want to have the tension alleviated just a bit.

What type of head size do you have on your tennis racquet? Contrary to what you may think, the larger the head size, the more of a strain on your elbows. You want to use a racquet with a standard head size and avoid those that are too large, despite the fact that they have a larger sweet spot.

Finally, when taking a look at your tennis racquet, you will also want to make sure that it is made to fit your grip. If the grip is too large or even too small, it puts more of a strain on your elbow.

If your doctor is well versed in sports medicine, you might want to take the racquet in to allow him or her to see the racquet and what can be done to alter the equipment and make it easier for you to use.

Not only are tennis racquets altered to prevent a relapse of tennis elbow. Golfers often find that they can eliminate a relapse if they change their clubs. Too often, a golfer will be using clubs that are oversized or too heavy. By switching to lighter clubs that have more comfortable grips, you can prevent a relapse of tennis elbow.

When you swing a racquet or a club, see how it feels in your hands and on your arms. If it feels too heavy and you find that you are straining your muscles too much to use the equipment, chances are that you are using the wrong equipment. The racquet or the golf club should be doing all the work. The swing should be steady and seemingly effortless. You should not feel strained when you are using any sort of sports equipment or it may be the wrong equipment.

After you have recovered from tennis elbow, you should take a look at your sports equipment and make the necessary changes. It may take a few tries to get used to the new equipment, but it will be well worth it in the long run as it will prevent you from having to suffer from another bout of tennis elbow.

Technique Modifications

Even professional tennis players and golfers change their techniques from time to time. This is because of the strain that they feel by using the same muscles and tendons over and over again. Professional golfer Tiger Woods has had to modify his technique several times because of the strain on his elbow and other parts of his body.

How are you swinging the club or racquet? Does it feel comfortable? If the racquet and clubs are fine, perhaps you need a change in technique?

Even professional athletes have trainers who help them with their techniques. Chances are that you are not a professional athlete, but someone who just enjoys the game. In the case of Brett, he had a trainer who had been helping him with tennis since he was a young kid. After he recovered from tennis elbow, his trainer advised him to try a different type of swing and taught him to practice it. It was tough at first for Brett to try this new technique, as is any new exercise. But the more he got the hang of it, the better he got. It was nothing drastic, just swinging the racquet in a different manner some of the time as well as a modification of his serve. Brett is now thinking of joining the professional circuit.

A change of technique in your sport can be very difficult to accomplish because of the habit that you have developed in your swing. But it can prevent you from enduring the pain of a relapse of tennis elbow. You have to think that if professional golfers like Tiger Woods, who literally has millions of dollars on the line when he plays golf, can manage to change his techniques and his swing (and yes, Woods has a professional trainer), then you can do this as well and save your elbows.

Using Counterforce Braces

Another way that you can prevent a relapse of tennis elbow is to use counterforce braces. These braces are used to reduce the

strain on the elbows. They are strapped onto your arm just below the elbow and absorb the tension, instead of sending it to the elbow. The purpose of the brace is to compress the muscles and keep them from expanding.

Using counterforce braces do not restrict movement of the arm when you are playing tennis or golf and you will often see golfers wearing these braces. If you have tried to modify your technique and equipment but are still running into problems with your elbows, using braces may be the option that is right for you. You can usually find these braces in a number of different places, including online and at sporting goods shops.

Whether you plan to modify your equipment, technique or wear a brace, you should do something after you have recovered from tennis elbow to prevent a relapse of this condition. Common sense dictates that if you have suffered from tennis elbow in the past, you will suffer from it again unless you do something to modify your behavior.

Chapter 7 - Prevention Of Tennis Elbow

As we said earlier, anyone can get tennis elbow. Although it is considered a sports injury, it is also often seen by people who use heavy equipment or use their hands in a repetitious manner (as is the case with Don and Doris).

Surgery for tennis elbow is rare and, as mentioned earlier, only occurs in about 10 percent of all cases. This is usually necessary after all other treatment methods have failed. In most cases, the treatment options were not given enough time to work. There is rarely a need for someone to undergo invasive surgery for the treatment of tennis elbow. If you do have to undergo surgery to repair the tendon in your elbow, chances are that your swing or game will not be the same. You will have to endure a rest period as well as a rehabilitation period, just as you would if you did not opt for the surgery. While surgical techniques will give you back the full range of motion, it can affect your game. This is why most doctors who practice in sports medicine will opt for more conservative treatment such as physical therapy and exercises to treat a torn tendon.

You can prevent tennis elbow by doing the following:

Exercise

Strengthen your arms by exercising them. The same exercises that are used when you go through rehab for tennis elbow can be used before you even get the condition. When you are young, you often think that your body will go on forever and you will not have

to endure any sort of pain. As we get older, we realize that this is not true. Although tennis elbow can strike anyone at any age, the older you get, the more of a chance you have of getting this condition, unless you are a professional athlete. Therefore, you should head tennis elbow off at the pass by using exercises before you actually come down with the condition that will strengthen the muscles in your arms and also the tendons.

Stretching Before Games

Before you commence to golfing or playing tennis, you should stretch your muscles in your arms as well as your legs. If you have ever taken an aerobics class you know that you will stretch and limber up before you start exercising. Most professional athletes know to do this as well. But amateur athletes often go out and play a tennis match or golf game without any sort of stretching whatsoever. This can end up causing tension in your arms and legs and also end up causing you to strain muscles or tear tendons. This is why it is so important to stretch out before games so that your tendons as well as your muscles are more limber and will be more flexible. Before you decide to golf or play tennis, or play any sport for that matter, do some warm up exercises.

Modifying Equipment

Make sure that the equipment that you use is right for you and does not put any sort of strain on you when you are using it. Golf clubs should not be cumbersome, but easy to swing. As should tennis racquets. We already went through the type of strings and tension that should be used with regard to your tennis racquet. Be

sure to allow the club or racquet to do all the work and not put unnecessary strain on your body.

Take Lessons

Many people take up golf or tennis for fun without taking a lesson. This is all well and good, but can end up damaging your body if you decide that you like the sport and begin to play frequently. This happens more with golfers than tennis players. Before you get into bad habits that will not only be disastrous to your game but will also cause a strain on your body, you should take a lesson and learn the proper way to handle a club or a racquet. Also, bear in mind that you may have to someday use a different technique. Any time you choose to perform repetitive motions with your hands or arms, you run the risk of getting the condition known as tennis elbow.

Take a break

Take a break during the course of a game and stretch out, if possible. You will see professional athletes taking a break now and then. Your body can only endure so much. If you have a job that requires you to use repetitive motions, take a break once in a while to lessen the risk of getting tennis elbow.

Use Icepacks

After your tennis game or golf game, you should use an icepack on your muscles and elbows to alleviate any sort of tension in the elbow and prevent swelling. By resting properly after a game and

taking care of your body, you may be able to stave off the effects of tennis elbow.

Tone down after a game

In addition to stretching and toning up before a game, you should also tone down after a game and give your muscles a chance to relax. After you have finished playing your golf or tennis game, you should stretch your muscles and relax them so that they are not so tight. This is a great way to “tone down.” You will often see professional athletes doing this, but the average person just leaves the golf course and goes to the clubhouse for a drink. Do yourself a favor and tone down your muscles after you play any sort of sport, especially tennis or golf.

Don't just think sports

While tennis elbow is considered to be a condition that affects athletes, most of the people who get tennis elbow are not athletes at all, but those who work in jobs where they practice repetitive motions with their arms. If you work in a job where you are constantly performing the same motion over and over again, you are at risk for tennis elbow. You should practice the same techniques that are recommended for athletes before and after your job. Limber up before you go to work, take breaks from work and stretch out and tone down after work to relax your muscles and tendons. Just because you are not playing sports does not protect you from the risk of getting tennis elbow. Again, only five percent of cases of tennis elbow are found in tennis players, and only about 40 percent of cases are found in athletes.

See a doctor who practices sports medicine

Understand that any time you play a sport for an extended period of time, chances are that you are going to endure some sort of sports injury. If you see a doctor who practices sports medicine, you have a better chance of not only getting proper treatment, but also being able to get your game back.

Many doctors today will treat pain with an icepack and medication. Unless the doctor is well versed in sports medicine, they will follow standard protocol and treat the symptom instead of treating the underlying cause of the condition. This is not a reflection on those doctors, just the way that doctors have been trained to traditionally practice medicine. Their first thought is the comfort of the patient. And the easiest way to achieve that comfort is through medication.

The same goes for a surgeon. If you go to an orthopedic surgeon for your tennis elbow condition, chances are that he will opt to operate on the elbow to make it better. This is how he has been trained - surgeons operate on anything that causes a patient harm so that they can eliminate the problem.

A doctor who is trained in sports medicine, however, is used to seeing sports injuries and will try different techniques to not only treat the patient, but to insure that he or she is able to get back to the game or activity that they enjoy. The sports medicine doctor will often use physical therapy, exercises and even the use of braces and other devices to treat the patient so that their game is

not affected.

If you feel that you are suffering from tennis elbow, you owe it to yourself to seek out a doctor who is well trained when it comes to treating this very common condition.