Are you feeling any of the following?

Pain or tenderness along the outside of the elbow that occurs when:

- performing a backhand stroke in racquet sports
- golfing
- picking up objects with palm down
- turning a door knob
- beginning a game or workout
- weightlifting

If so, you may have Tennis Elbow, an irritation where the forearm muscle tendons attach to outside of the elbow. These tendons and muscles assist with performing backhand motions, raising the hand while the palm faces down, and rotating the palm up.

Tennis Elbow is brought on by:

- tight forearm muscles
- weak forearm muscles
- faulty arm mechanics in racquet sports or weightlifting
- a sudden increase in the intensity of a workout or sports activity

To relieve pain and speed recovery

Unless your elbow pain is severe or you feel numbness and tingling in your hands/fingers, you can try the following:

- Rest from all activities that cause pain, especially throwing, lifting, and racquet sports.
- Ice 2-3 times per day. Place crushed ice in a plastic bag over the elbow for 20 minutes.
- Aspirin or Ibuprofen:
  - To reduce pain - take per product’s guidelines
  - To reduce inflammation - take 650 mg of aspirin or 400 mg of ibuprofen three times a day for 1-2 weeks.

  Important: Stop taking if it causes stomach upset or bloody stools. Contact your physician if you are currently taking any other medications or if you have any questions.

Stretch - to reduce tension along the forearm/elbow muscles.

Technique: Stretch to a gentle pull, and hold without bouncing for 20-30 seconds.
Frequency: Do 2-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions per day, 6-7 days per week.

Backhand Stretch

- Straighten your elbow with your palm facing down.
- Grab the back of your hand with your other hand and pull down until you feel a stretch in your forearm.

Forehand Stretch

- Straighten your elbow with your palm facing down.
- Grasp your fingers with your other hand.
- Slowly pull your hand up and back until you feel a gentle stretch in palm-side of your wrist and forearm.
Strengthen - elbow muscles and tendons to prevent re-injury.

Technique: Must not cause elbow pain in the first two sets. If it does cause pain, wait one week and try again.

Frequency: Do three sets of ten repetitions, 3-4 days per week.

Reverse Wrist Curl (Backhand)
- Sit with your elbow palm down, straight, and wrist resting on your knee.
- Slowly bend your wrist up as far as possible.
- Hold for two counts, and then slowly lower.
- Start with no weight, if not painful, try one pound.

Wrist Rotation
- Sit with your elbow straight and your wrist resting on your knee.
- Hold 1-2 pounds.
- Slowly rotate your forearm until your palm faces down.
- Next, rotate your forearm until your palm faces up.

Thumb Up (Radial Deviation)
- Sit with your injured elbow straight, forearm resting on your knee, and thumb up.
- Slowly bend your wrist up as far as possible.
- Hold for two counts, and then slowly lower.
- Start with no weight, if not painful, try one pound.

Call your doctor if
- elbow pain continues after three weeks of self-care.
- you feel sharp, shooting pain even at rest (sitting and sleeping).
- your elbow swells.
- you see or feel a dent in the tendon (possible tear).
- you feel unusual numbness or tingling in your forearm or hand (possible circulation or nerve problems).
- your hand or fingers are blue and cold (possible circulation problem).
- your elbow is red and hot and you have a fever (possible infection).

If you are a registered University of Illinois student and you have questions or concerns, or need to make an appointment, please call: Dial-A-Nurse at 333-2700

If you are concerned about any difference in your treatment plan and the information in this handout, you are advised to contact your health care provider.

Visit the McKinley Health Center Web site at: http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu