

## My elbow hurts - Why?

- Is it a **new acute injury** from a fall, or from sport or activity? (Repetitive movements or overloading in the garden or around the house)
- Or is it an **old chronic injury**, with slow onset with pain located on the inside or outside of the elbow?

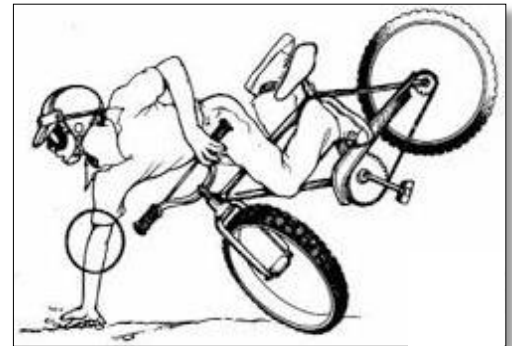
### 1. A fall onto outstretched hand

Any fall can result in a myriad of potential injuries such as a sprain of ligamentous tissue, strained muscle tissue or bone fractures.

These injuries may occur all the way up the arm. Imagine the jarring force being transmitted through the fingers and wrist moving up to the elbow and finally being transmitted to your shoulder and collar bone, or neck.

#### MANAGEMENT:

- Ice, relative rest and immobilisation as needed
- Seek professional help from a medical doctor or a physiotherapist.



**2. Golfers Elbow** – The inside elbow region is aggravated where flexor tendons attach to the ulna. These are the *muscles that flex and twist the wrist*. Occurs not just in golfers but also in those who do repetitive moves and weight training with poor technique. It is more prevalent in people over 40 years.

**SIGNS:** Pain with flexing the wrist and or squeezing objects

**CAUSED BY:**

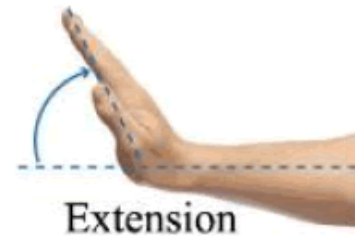
- Overuse, repetition or overloading the muscle or tendon attachment to the bone;
- Direct blow to the area which provokes swelling and subsequent degenerative changes.

#### MANAGEMENT:

- Ice and relative rest;
- strength and endurance rehabilitation for shoulder, forearm, and wrist muscles;
- ergonomic assessment of equipment
- technique correction for sport



**3. Tennis Elbow** – The outside elbow region is aggravated where the extensor tendons attach to the radius. These are the muscles that extend the wrist. Occurs not just in tennis players, but also in people who use their arms repeatedly eg. painting, typing and gardening. It is more prevalent in people between 30-50 years.



**SIGNS:** Difficulty grasping or lifting objects, weak grip strength, dull ache, tingling or numbness in fingers, pain during and after activities involving the wrist.

**CAUSED BY:** - Overuse, repetition or overloading the muscle or tendon attachment to the bone;  
- Direct blow to the area which provokes swelling and subsequent degenerative changes.

**MANAGEMENT:**

- Ice and relative rest;
- strength and endurance rehabilitation for shoulder, forearm, and wrist muscles;
- ergonomic assessment of equipment
- technique correction for sport

**4. Little Leaguers Elbow** – is a growth plate injury on the medial/inner aspect of elbow. The growth plate is the attachment site for a group of muscles that flex the wrist and rotate palm down, usually occurring in the 8-15/16 year group, until growth plate fuses.



**SIGNS:** Aching, pain, swelling at inner elbow region. Maybe a popping sound will be heard at time of injury.

**CAUSED BY:** - Overuse/overloading to medial elbow as a result of repetitive throwing

**MANAGEMENT:**

- Relative rest from throwing activities.
- Assessment of throwing technique, equipment, training and reducing playing time and load.
- Strength and endurance rehabilitation for trunk and shoulder/arm muscles.
- Bracing or surgery if avulsion fracture occurs.
- Year round fitness and conditioning; and active rest from throwing sports (continue to participate in non-throwing sports and activities).

**Take Home Message!**

Seek early professional help to minimise an acute injury becoming a chronic injury.

If you do have existing elbow symptoms, perhaps some targeted specific advice and management strategies will help reduce or resolve your symptoms.

