

PHYSICAL THERAPY PROTOCOL

Medial Epicondylitis — Conservative Management

Non-operative treatment of “golfer’s elbow” (flexor-pronator tendinopathy)

Medial epicondylitis is a degenerative tendinopathy of the flexor-pronator origin. Non-operative care emphasizes activity modification, load management, and progressive eccentric strengthening of the wrist flexors and pronators. Recovery is often measured in months.

General Precautions

- Modify aggravating activities — avoid repetitive gripping, wrist flexion, and forearm pronation.
- A counterforce brace may reduce load on the tendon.
- Some discomfort with loading exercises is acceptable; sharp pain is not.

Phase I — Pain Control Weeks 0-2

Goals

- Reduce pain and inflammation
- Protect the tendon from overload

Precautions / Restrictions

- Avoid repetitive wrist flexion, pronation, and forceful gripping

Exercises & Interventions

- Relative rest / activity modification
- Counterforce brace
- Ice after activity
- Gentle pain-free wrist and forearm range of motion

Criteria to Advance

- Resting pain reduced
- Gentle motion without sharp pain

Phase II — Mobility & Isometrics Weeks 2-6

Goals

- Restore flexibility
- Introduce loading

Exercises & Interventions

- Wrist flexor and pronator stretching
- Isometric wrist flexion holds
- Begin eccentric wrist flexor/pronator strengthening
- Soft-tissue / manual therapy as needed

Criteria to Advance

- Tolerating isometrics without flare

Phase III — Progressive Strengthening Weeks 6-12

Goals

- Restore strength and load tolerance

Exercises & Interventions

- Progressive eccentric and concentric wrist flexor/pronator strengthening
- Grip strengthening
- Forearm and shoulder-girdle conditioning

Criteria to Advance

- Grip strength improving toward symmetric
- Minimal pain with daily tasks

Phase IV — Return to Activity Months 3+

Goals

- Return to full sport/work
- Prevent recurrence

Exercises & Interventions

- Sport-/job-specific loading progression
- Maintenance strengthening and stretching
- Technique/equipment optimization

Criteria to Advance

- Full painless function
- Symmetric grip strength

This protocol is a general guideline. Progression is criteria-based and may be advanced or slowed by Dr. O'Donnell based on intraoperative findings, tissue quality, fixation, and individual healing. Time frames are approximate. Direct questions to the office at (305) 393-8810.