

**Lateral epicondylitis – Non-operative Management**  
**Physical Therapy**  
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*Rehabilitation Precautions:*

- The first goal of rehabilitation is to decrease pain and inflammation.
- Emphasis should be maintained on frequency and consistency of the exercises, rather than intensity of the individual exercises. At the completion of the program, the exercises should be done forever as a maintenance regimen
- Home therapy should be instructed, with transition to home therapy when appropriate

**Phase I: Restore pain free ROM**

- Goals:
  - Patient education
  - Decrease pain
  - Restore pain free ROM
- Pain relieving modalities as indicated
- Massage as indicated
- Scapular strengthening
- Postural exercises
- Gentle wrist extensor stretching
- Brace during activity (wrist support)
- Goals for Progression to Next Phase
  - Full ROM of wrist and elbow
  - Improvement of pain to 0/10 at rest, not greater than 3/10 with gripping/lifting

**Phase II: Improve strength**

- Goals:
  - Improved grip strength with hand dynamometer
  - Improved proximal strength
  - Patient can lift 5 pounds with affected arm with 0-1/10 pain
- Proximal strengthening of scapula/rotator cuff
- Eccentric wrist extensor strengthening
- Diagonal patterns for upper extremity (PNF)
- Gentle wrist extensor stretching
- Circumferential forearm brace for activities of daily living
- Goals for Progression to Next Phase
  - Good proximal strength/scapular stability
  - 75% limb symmetry with grip strength with hand held dynamometer
  - 5/5 wrist extensor strength

### **Phase III: Advanced strengthening**

- **Goals:**
  - Pain free when lifting 10 lbs and performing ADLs
  - Pain free with grip testing (80% symmetry)
  - Able to grip and swing tennis racket without pain
- Continue proximal strengthening of scapula and rotator cuff
- Wrist extensor strengthening
- Diagonal PNF patterns for UE
- Sport Specific activities (tennis swings, etc) if pain free
- **Goals for Progression to Next Phase**
  - 85% symmetry on grip testing
  - Pain free wrist extension with MMT
  - No pain during ADLs or 10 lb lifting

### **Phase IV: Return to sport/discharge**

- **Goals:**
  - Pain free with grip testing (85% symmetry)
  - Pain free swinging tennis racket/hitting ball
  - Pain free resisted wrist extension
  - 5/5 cuff strength, scapular symmetry
- Continue proximal strengthening of scapula and rotator cuff
- Wrist extensor strengthening and flexibility
- Total body condition
- Tennis specific activity
- **Goals for Progression to Next Phase**
  - 85% symmetry on grip testing
  - Pain free wrist extension with MMT
  - No pain during ADLs or 10 lb lifting
  - Able to hit all tennis strokes without pain