



Tendonitis

The painful condition of tendinitis can occur in any muscle-tendon unit in your body. Be sure to see your physician or nurse practitioner for a proper diagnosis as many conditions can cause pain and swelling.

Tendons are fibrous cords that attach muscles to bones. They are vulnerable to injury because the force of muscle contractions becomes concentrated through the narrower tendons. You can get tendinitis when a tendon rubs against a bone, ligament or another tendon. It can be caused by an abrupt forceful motion or by repetitive motions. Tendinitis is characterized by pain along the muscles and tendons. The muscles and tendons can feel warm, swollen and tender, especially where they attach to the bones. Overdoing it can make the tendons swell and they actually become weaker. One common site of tendinitis is the outer aspect of your elbow, referred to as 'tennis elbow'.



To prevent tendinitis:

- Don't overdo it! Take a break from big jobs so your muscles can rest and recover. When lifting heavy things ("Honey can you move the TV

out here for the game?”), size up the load before you lift. If you feel you can't do the job alone, get help.

- Keep muscles flexible - stretch, stretch, stretch! Take a few minutes every day to do a quick stretch routine. Stretching just after your shower or after you exercise is the best time; your muscles and tendons are warm and more pliable then.

- Be more careful as you grow older; your muscles are less flexible and more easily strained.

- Keep strong for the things you like to do. When you exercise regularly your muscles and tendons are less likely to be strained. I have become a proponent of weight lifting - twice a week is enough to maintain strength for me. Core muscle strength in the upper back is key to keeping your arms pain-free.

- Drink plenty of fluids. This will help your metabolism rid you of toxins that build up when your muscles are active.

- Develop the right technique with your work, your leisure activities and tasks around the house. At work, if the keyboard is too high, it can strain your wrists. You weekend sports enthusiasts may remember your coach telling you the proper way to swing that golf club. Proper techniques are just as important at home when you are cooking up Emeril's latest gourmet delight. Whipping your wrist around as you make that sauce that takes at least ten minutes of whipping can make you core for days!

- Get the right equipment. Using tools with handles that are too small can cause undue stress to your muscles and tendons. This rule holds true whether the tool is a knife, a rake, a set of pliers or a pen. Pad tool handles or get ones with softer, wider grips.

- Listen to your body. If you feel pain, reduce the intensity of your workout. If your pain persists, stop that activity and get help to find out if you have tendinitis.

Tendinitis Tip: Rest, stretch, massage, ice, and see your Hand Surgeon or Hand Therapist for specific recommendations.