

Sweetwater Pain & Spine


Home Exercise Handout

Lateral Epicondylitis (Tennis Elbow)

Lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow) results from overuse and degenerative changes in the wrist extensor tendons at their origin on the lateral epicondyle, causing pain and weakness with gripping, lifting, and forearm rotation. Eccentric loading is the cornerstone of treatment—some discomfort during the eccentric phase is expected and acceptable. Pair it with stretching and forearm strengthening for the best results; consistent daily practice over 8–12 weeks produces the most durable improvement.

1 Eccentric Wrist Extension

3 x 15 reps • 3–4 sec eccentric phase • 2x daily • 8–12 weeks




1

SET UP

Sit with the affected forearm on a table, palm down, wrist at the edge.


Hold a light dumbbell (start with 1–3 lb) in your hand.



2

CONCENTRIC PHASE


Use the unaffected hand to passively lift the affected wrist into full extension.



3

ECCENTRIC PHASE

Release the good hand. Slowly lower the wrist back down over 3–4 seconds. Focus on a slow, controlled lowering.



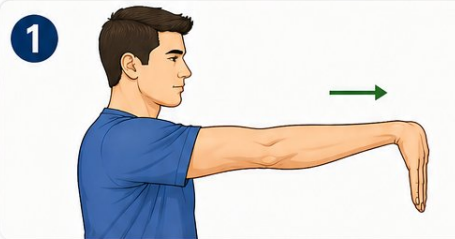
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ADVICE

Pain up to 5/10 during the eccentric phase is expected. If completely pain-free, increase weight by 0.5–1 lb. Discontinue only if pain exceeds 7/10 or persists >24 hours post-exercise.

2 Wrist Extensor Stretch

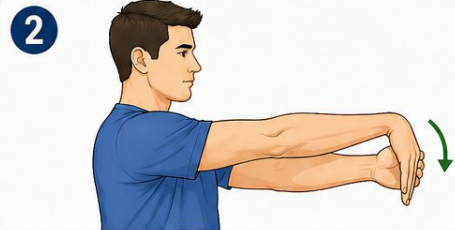
3 reps • Hold 30 sec • Before and after each session



1

SET UP


Extend the affected arm straight in front at shoulder height, elbow fully straight.



2

STRETCH


Use the opposite hand to bend the wrist downward and toward the body.




3

FEEL THE STRETCH

Feel the stretch along the top of the forearm and outer elbow. Hold 30 seconds.

 30 sec



4

PERFORM REGULARLY

Perform this stretch before and after the eccentric loading exercise each session.

3 Forearm Pronation / Supination (Hammer)

3 x 15 reps • Slow and controlled • Daily



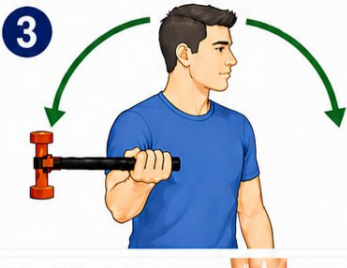
SET UP

- Sit in a chair and rest your affected forearm on your thigh, elbow at ~90°.
- Hold a hammer (or light dumbbell) by the handle with a firm but relaxed grip.
- Start with palm facing down (pronated position).



SUPINATE

- Slowly rotate the forearm so your palm faces up (supinated position).
- The weight of the hammer head swings to the outside, creating resistance.



PAUSE & RETURN

- Briefly pause at full supination.
- Return slowly to pronation — rotate your forearm so your palm faces down again.
- Control the movement; resist the urge to let gravity do the work.
- The controlled return (eccentric phase) is the most important part.

4 Grip Strengthening (Putty or Ball)

3 x 15 reps • Hold 5 sec • Daily



SET UP

Sit tall with your forearm resting on a table or armrest. Hold putty or a soft rubber ball in your palm (RIGHT hand). Keep your wrist in a neutral position.



SQUEEZE & HOLD

Squeeze the putty or ball firmly using all your fingers and thumb. Hold the squeeze for 5 seconds.



RELEASE

Release completely and open your hand fully. Let your fingers relax for a moment.



FINGER EXTENSION (PROGRESSION)

Press your fingers out against the putty resistance. Hold for 5 seconds, then release and relax. 3 x 15 reps

■ Stop any exercise that causes sharp pain, new numbness or weakness, or worsening of symptoms, and contact our office. These exercises supplement but do not replace your provider's individualized plan.

Questions or concerns? Call Sweetwater Pain & Spine: (775) 870-1480

Central Reno
645 N Arlington, Ste 670
Reno, NV 89503

South Reno
10451 Double R Blvd
Reno, NV 89521

Sparks
4838 Sparks Blvd, Ste 102
Sparks, NV 89436

Carson City
412 W John St, Ste B
Carson City, NV 89703