

Central Vermont Medical Center

ORTHOPEDICS & SPORTS MEDICINE

**Tennis Elbow/Lateral Epicondylitis
Decreasing Stress in Daily Activities**

Bracing

- Use a cock-up splint/brace for heavy, resistive activities. The splint is to assist as a reminder to keep your wrist in a neutral position. If the arm has increased soreness after wearing the splint, you are working against it.

Driving

- Keep hands at the 4 and 8 o'clock positions on the steering wheel. Avoid hanging your hand over the steering wheel (palm down).

Computers/Typing

- Keep the mouse close to your body, not on the desk where you need to reach for it, and/or switch to the other side, and/or buy an optical mouse that does not need a mouse pad and be used anywhere (even on your lap).
- Be sure to relax your hand completely while waiting for the computer screen.
- Keep wrists straight when typing; avoid letting them bend or extend. Keep fingernails short.
- If typing on a regular keyboard aggravates your elbow consider getting a split keyboard.
- Avoid typing with wrists resting on the wrist rest or the edge of the table.

Lifting/Carrying

- Lift and carry all items palm up.
- When getting clothes from the washer, turn your palm up and slide your hand behind the clothes.
- Avoid carrying groceries, briefcases, and suitcases with an extended/straight elbow, handles looped around the wrist. Try to carry them on your forearm.
- When lifting files from a file drawer; slide an 18" wooden ruler down the back side of the file, wiggle it back and forth and then slide your palm in to pick up the file from the bottom.

Other Tips

- Write on an incline (3 ring binder, 2" works great).
- Do not lean on the elbow during typing, driving or playing video games.
- For recreational activities (example -but not limited to- playing video games, sewing or needlework) keep wrists straight or wear your splint, and stop every 15 minutes to stretch.
- Use a large width pen for writing: e-Grip, PhD, Dr.Grip, etc.

Cooking

- Instead of lifting a large pasta pot full of water to empty into the sink consider using a metal strainer inside the pot then fill it by a 2 cup measure, or spray hose. When the pasta is done cooking, wearing oven mitts, lift the strainer with the cooked pasta.
- Saute or stir with wrist in neutral. Use built-up large grip utensils, and don't grip handles tightly.
- When peeling potatoes keep wrist straight and push away from you. Turn the potato with the other hand so affected arm does not have to strain outside of its neutral position. Consider scrubbing the potatoes and eating them with the skins on.
- When slicing or chopping, consider using a pizza cutter (keep utensil perpendicular to your wrist), an L-shaped knife (available at medical supply stores), or a mini food processor.
- To lift and pour beverage containers consider buying smaller drink containers (quarts or half-gallons instead of gallons and 2-liter bottles) in recyclable plastic. Use affected arm to support the side.

Housework/Maintenance

- Keep scissors handy for opening vacuum-sealed bags and medications packets.
- When sweeping/mopping/raking/snow shoveling keep your affected arm away from your body and lower on the handle than the unaffected arm. Use your whole body to pull or push.
- When hammering keep your wrist perpendicular to the hammer and the elbow slightly extended.
- Avoid excessive grasping of slippery objects, vibrating tools, or holding onto tool handles that require forceful grip.
- Consider power tools/drills and screwdrivers with minimal vibration whenever possible. Keep them well charged and use the appropriate bit for item to be drilled. If using a nail gun consider loading it ¼ to ½ full and use affected arm in neutral to stabilize nail gun.

Driving

- Keep hands at the 10 and 2 o'clock positions on the steering wheel.

Sleeping

- Be sure your wrist is in near neutral in your preferred sleeping position. Do not lie on top of a fully extended elbow when sleeping.



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- When reading for an item, initiate the movement with your elbow so that your arm is away from your body then direct your hand towards the item.
- If you get an acute flare up, ice the area with an ice pack 10-15 minutes 4-6x/day. Keep a washcloth between the ice and your skin.