

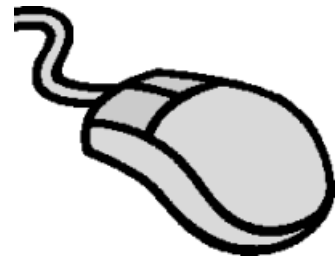
Condition of the Week

By Randal Burkholder, DC

Tennis Elbow

You don't have to play tennis like a pro to get tennis elbow! In fact most people who get tennis elbow don't play tennis, they work on a computer. That's right. Tennis elbow is usually caused by that little mouse.

Thirty years ago techies announced that the computer would change our lives in ways that we could barely imagine. In many ways that prediction has come true, but not all of the changes have been positive. While computers have helped to increase productivity they have not resulted in shorter work days for the average American. Rather we have simply traded one set of tasks for another. For tens of millions of us our main source of physical activity is the 40 or more hours a week we spend typing and clicking on our computers. All of that clicking has had some undesirable effects.



Clicking and typing all day over-uses the muscles and tendons that move your fingers and hands. These muscles run from your hand up your forearm and connect at or near your elbow. Repetitive over-use causes tendinitis to develop as the tendons become inflamed and gradually begin to weaken and scar. When this happens close to their attachment at the elbow the condition is called tennis elbow.

It can take weeks or in some cases months or even years before you begin to notice the effects of tennis elbow. Early signs are often a feeling of mild cramping after extended repetitive use or mild tenderness of the elbow or the muscles of the forearm. If left untreated the damage to the tendons can become permanent and arthritis can form at the hand, wrist or elbow; at times leading to painful pinching of the nerves running down the arm. This is often experienced as numbing or tingling in the hand and fingers or shooting pains in the forearm or hand.

Fighting Back

You probably don't have a choice about your computer time at work. So the name of the game is minimizing its negative effects on your body. Here are a few tips:

- ✚ **Evaluate your workstation set-up.** With your feet on the floor your knees and hips should be on level and your shoulder blades should touch your chair's backrest. Your monitor should be centered to eye level in front of you and your keyboard and mouse should be placed so that your wrists and forearms remain straight and level while typing and clicking.
- ✚ **If you work on a computer avoid playing on one.** Too much of any activity can cause problems.
- ✚ **Play with Play-Doh:** Kneading Play-Doh (choose your favorite color!) periodically throughout the day can help to relieve tension in your wrists and forearms. Be sure to keep your wrists straight while you do it.
- ✚ **Eat an anti-inflammatory diet or use an anti-inflammatory supplement:** base your diet on fruits and vegetables and avoid grains, flour, grain based oils and grain fed animals. If changing your diet seems too hard, try adding an anti-inflammatory supplement like PRO-ENZ to your daily routine.
- ✚ **Give us a call:** if you already experience pain, tingling or numbness in your elbow, forearm or hand and fingers then its time to get some extra help.

Anti-inflammatory Foods:

All fruits and vegetables, all spices, eggs, olive and coconut oils, potatoes, grass fed beef, chicken and eggs, nuts, butter, dark chocolate, red wine, stout beer and lots of water.

Do you know someone with tennis elbow? We would love to help and will gladly address any questions you may have about this topic.

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