

WRIST AND ELBOW PROBLEMS

Back to Health Chiropractic
Centre

May, 2003

**Back to Health
Chiropractic Centre**
240 Catherine St. Ste. 100
Ottawa, Ont.
K2P 2G8
237-3306
www.Back2Health4you.com

Dr. Barbara Rodwin B.Sc., D.C.,
D.Acu., A.R.T.

Keri-Lyn Dudgeon B.Sc. (H.K.)

Trevor Nootenboom R.M.T.,
A.R.T.
Rina McNairn R.M.T., A.R.T.
Jenny Wolfgram R.M.T., A.R.T.
Ken Flannery-Fleck R.M.T., A.R.T.

Joined at the wrist...

Without your elbow, wrist, hand and fingers you would be pretty hard pressed to do all the things you enjoy. Golfing, tennis, paddling, gardening, cooking, baseball, and so on. In fact it would also be just as difficult to do all the things that one doesn't enjoy either! Namely WORK!

From the elbow down to your pinky finger and thumb is a length of muscles that help to bend and rotate both your wrist and fingers. These muscles can be divided into extensors which you find on the back of your hand and forearm, and the flexors which are located in the palm of your hand and up the forearm. The muscles provide not only movement of the wrist and fingers but their tendons also help to provide stability of the wrist joint.

Aside from fractures, sprains and strains which would constitute a traumatic injury to the

bones and surrounding structures, overuse injuries are a major component of wrist and elbow problems.

What an overuse injury means is that the physical demands to the local anatomy exceeds the capacity of the stressed tissue to tolerate it. This can result in damage to the tissue, inflammation, micro-tearing, and the buildup of adhesions or scar tissue. It doesn't always take a blow to the area for this to happen, small, repeated movements over a prolonged period of time can do just as much damage or more.

The following articles will look at some of the problems which might arise from overuse and some of the things you can be doing to either help prevent them or the treatments which may help to alleviate them.

Golfer's and Tennis Elbow

Epicondylitis is a term that refers to inflammation at the elbow joint. Also known as tendinitis. Whether it be golfer's elbow or tennis elbow helps to describe whether the inflammation is occurring on the inner or outer aspect of the arm.

Epicondylitis can occur due to a variety of factors such as improper selection of equipment, poor technique, poor training routine or repetitive wrist and forearm activities.

Patients with elbow epicondylitis complain of pain either along the inner or outer aspect of the elbow which worsens with repetitive gripping or wrist motions. The pain may progress to the point

where simple maneuvers such as twisting a door-knob or lifting a cup of coffee cause severe elbow pain. Patients can develop mild to moderate weakness in addition to the chronic pain. Elbow epicondylitis is best diagnosed by a physical examination by an orthopedist.

How you can prevent this:

STRETCHING! One of the most important things that you can do is to try elongate the muscle fibers so that adhesions do not form around the tissue.

ICE- if you feel that the area is hot, or painful to touch it is probably inflamed and the best way to relieve this is by putting an ice pack on for about 15 minutes.

Special points of interest:

- Intermittent stretching while you are at your desk can help to reduce the stress on your back, shoulders and arms. Here is a website that you can upload onto your software to remind you to take a break:

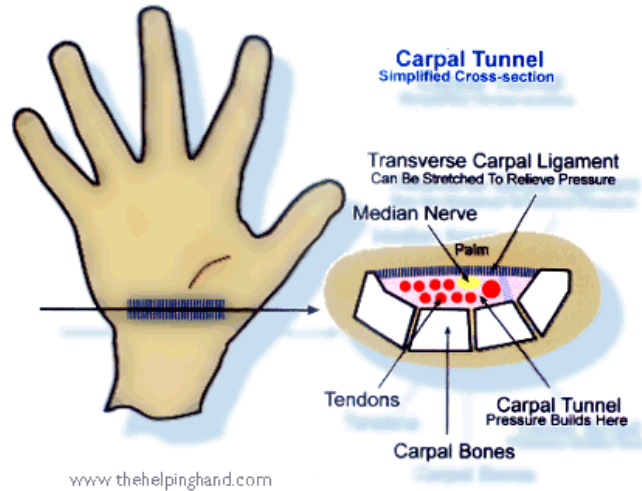
www.restreminder.com

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Image: Sony Headline

What are the Symptoms?

- **Tightness, discomfort, stiffness, soreness or burning in the hands, wrists, fingers, forearms, or elbows**
- **Tingling, coldness, or numbness in the hands**
- **Clumsiness or loss of strength and coordination in the hands**
- **Pain that wakes you up at night**
- **Feeling a need to massage your hands, wrists, and arms**
- **Pain in the upper back, shoulders, or neck associated with using the computer.**



Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is one becoming one of the more prevalent occupational injuries in the workplace which then carries over into our daily recreational activities as well. Although repetitive strain is one of the risk factors also included are pregnancy and obesity. All of these conditions decrease the space of the carpal tunnel (see picture) and add pressure to the structures that pass within it.

Each of the treatments offered here at Back to Health have their benefits.

Cumulatively they work together to reduce the inflammation, pressure, muscle tightness, adhesions and joint stability.

The ultimate goal is to control the pain, and restore mobility of the joint. Massage, ART, chiropractic and acupuncture can all aid in achieving such goals.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome affects over 1% of the population in Canada.

Improving Your Golf Swing Mechanics...off the course!

By Dr. Brian Abelson (2002) www.drabelson.com

Your golf swing is all about proper body mechanics. A good golf swing requires full rotational capacity of nearly every joint involved and must be done efficiently - easily - explosively - repeatedly. Many swing faults are directly attributed to poor joint mobility, resulting from soft tissue restrictions. When the balance of muscles is altered the movement patterns of the joint are often restricted.

Common swing faults: Common swing faults occur due to tight shoulders, tightness in the hip joint, spinal injuries and repetitive strain injuries. Wrist and elbow injuries often occurs when the body does not have the capacity to effectively compensate at either the shoulder or spine. The wrists are then over-used to drive as well as to decelerate the golf club.

Soft tissue adhesions form from repetitive strain injuries that cause

micro-tears. This scar tissue is less elastic and causes muscles to lose their stretch component and restricts the muscles ability to slide freely past one another. In addition these adhesions cannot be broken down by stretching. All stretching does is elongate the already normal tissue.



Applying ART: Once the shortened muscles are identified, ART treatment works to break up the scar/adhesion tissue and return integrity back to the soft tissue. This is done by 1) maintaining a contact on the adhesion 2) elongating the muscle along its fiber orientation to break up the adhesion and 3) once the adhesion is broken up, the soft tissue can glide unimpeded, allowing you to reach the positions your golf professionals are showing you without tension, pain or further injury! Happy driving!