

# Tennis Elbow

By Ramsay McMaster Golf Physiotherapist

## Cause, effect and prevention

On every golf course in the world you will see golfers with 'tennis elbow' braces on their arms. Most golfers will also know a member at their club who has experienced the curse of 'tennis elbow'. Contrary to popular belief most golfers incur 'tennis elbow' rather than 'golfers elbow'

Thirty to forty years ago this was not the case. 'Golfers elbow' was more prevalent purely due to changes in golf technique over the years.

In the 1950's & 60's the golf swing had a tendency to be more 'army' with greater lateral movement. More recently the swing has evolved into a more athletic and powerful movement (research has shown that the club head speeds can reach 120km /hr and the forces are equal to your body weight at impact) that is produced much more from the deep trunk muscles firing through the golf swing.

### What is Tennis Elbow?

- A repetitive Strain injury.
- Pain on the outside of the forearm radiating down into the wrist area.
- Aggravated by gripping objects e.g. golf clubs, door handles, steering wheel.
- The pain gradually leads to a feeling of weakness in the hand and arm and eventually an inability to play golf.

### What Causes Tennis Elbow?

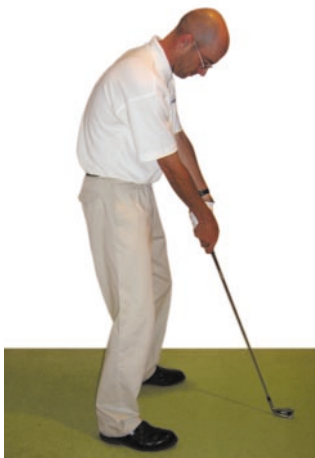
- Constant repetition of a movement e.g. golf practice, computer work etc.

You must be aware of the origins of Tennis Elbow from a golf perspective. The following self-assessment system can be used to give to your golf coach and golf therapist. Outlined are checklists to fill in and self-screen your equipment, swing and body for tennis elbow.

**TENNIS ELBOW CAN BE CAUSED AS A RESULT OF THE FOLLOWING (tick the appropriate boxes).**

### Golf equipment check

- Have not had grips checked for the right size (small hands; grips too big)
- Glove worn on the palm of the hand and fingers (compensating with hands)
- Club held too high in palm of Left hand
- Clubs not fitted correctly (too heavy, long, etc)
- Slippery grips, old/dirty/wet grips with rain or sweat



### Golf practice check

- Poor training regimes e.g. spending too long on one shot causing arms to over compensate
- Practicing off mats for excessive periods of time: Excessive impact on non forgiving surface
- Weak postural and deep core stability muscles in shoulders/abdominals and gluteals causing arms to over compensate



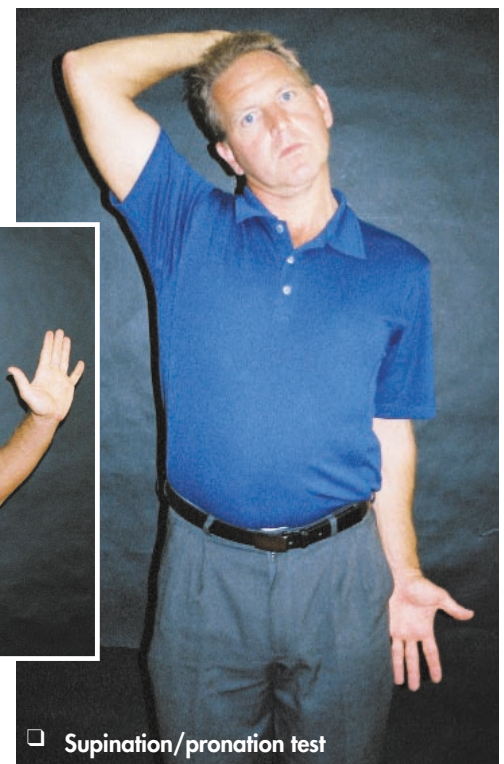
## Golf swing check

- ❑ Poor warm up for golf: no stretching and hitting full long shots straight away
- ❑ Gripping too hard on the club: poor grip position, badly conditioned grips
- ❑ Poor set up:  
Poor posture eg Droopy Flower, causing excessive arching of wrists at address – wrists too high;  
Poor grip – too weak in left hand causing incorrect hinging/ cocking of wrists
- ❑ Poor sequencing: over use of hands and arms, compensating for poor sequence of body part
- ❑ Poor impact positions to the ball: Weak wrist position from poor backswing causing excessive vibration through impact
- ❑ Over cocking/bowing of the wrists on the backswing
- ❑ Loosening the grip at the top of the swing and then re-gripping, possible grip tension at address causing change of grip pressure during swing
- ❑ Excessive repetition of a bad movement in your golf swing
- ❑ Poor swing misconceptions: Keeping head still and keeping left arm straight



## GOLF PHYSICAL TESTS

Please note: these can also be used as tennis elbow injury prevention exercise drills



## Conclusion

If you have found the breakdowns are related to your tennis elbow please contact your local golf therapist and golf coach to seek appropriate consultation.

Hopefully by checking yourself out and using this screening system you will prevent tennis elbow limiting your golf participation.

Present the 'tennis elbow self test check list system' to your golf therapist and golf coach to ensure that everyone is addressing the management of your tennis elbow.

For more information or an appointment contact Liam Fitzpatrick at the Hong Kong Golf Injury Clinic, phone (852) 2529 1818.