

Golf Health and Fitness

Article: **Elbow injuries can sideline you!**

If you have been reading my articles recently, you have learned about back and neck injuries, weak abdominals and poor posture as being the key links to rising handicaps.

But what has become the second most common golf ailment (backs being #1) that drastically affects performance, and that can become a chronic problem are elbow injuries.

The onset of injury is most commonly caused by too many divots, (driving your club into the ground), which causes a whiplash affect to the elbows surrounding tissues. Another reasonable explanation can be from overuse syndrome, (hitting too many balls), or by compensating (doing extra work to protect and injured body part).

Some of the most common injuries to the elbow are, Medial epicondylitis (pain and swelling around the inside portion of the elbow joint), olecranon bursitis (inflammation to the fluid filled sack that helps lubricate the joint), bone spurs, median, radial and ulnar nerve problems, that radiate from the elbow to the fingers. There are ligament structures that can develop sprains from repeated trauma, and small muscle fiber tears to the extensor mass that attaches to the wrist and then to the elbow.

It has been my experience with golfers that have experienced elbow problems, that they wait until the problem has become chronic before they do anything about it, they would even try to initially apply heat to the area, not knowing that heat further increases inflammation. Some try and deal with the pain, and will keep playing golf even though they can't straighten out their arm.

If you have an elbow injury, you will want to treat it with ice, compression and elevation for the first 48-72 hours, to control the pain and swelling. Do not attempt to play if it becomes to sore to extend your forearm, because you will just provoke the injury. Then it would be a good idea to get some lessons from your golf pro, to work on your technique, so that your problem doesn't become chronic. Stretching everyday to alleviate tightness is a good idea, as well as strengthening the muscle structures around the elbow. Just because you have elbow injuries from golf doesn't mean that the problem is coming from the elbow, it can becoming from a weak core (muscles that attach to your spine, shoulder blades and pelvis, which are responsible for the structures internal stability. If you think of your core as the foundation of your house, and say the foundation has weakened from so many years of wear and tear, you then start to have problems from the outer structures, like the beams, or the stucco which starts to crack, more time has passed by, and then the house collapses, because you didn't try and reinforce the core of the house with additional support. Many times people will treat the symptoms but not the problem. So seeing a physical therapist to get further treatment is also important for your health. They can do muscle testing to see wear the problem is coming from, and save you time and additional frustration from a decrease in golf performance.

Here are 2 effective stretches to increase your flexibility and an exercise to help strengthen your forearms.

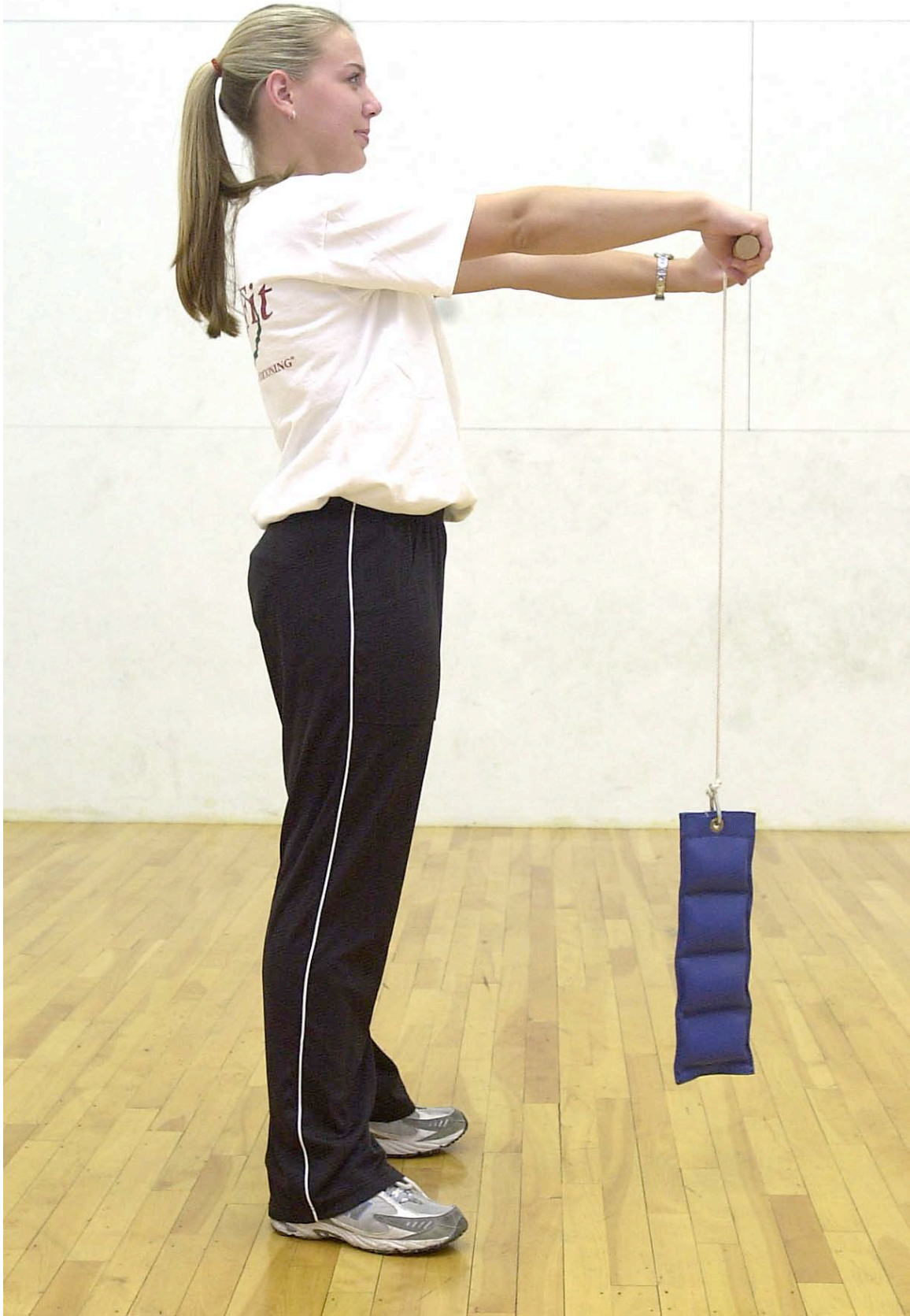
Note: Consult a physician before attempting these exercises.



Wrist flexion stretch



Wrist extension stretch



Wrist roll- up