

Lateral epicondylitis

Lateral epicondylitis is an overuse syndrome affecting the common extensor tendon at the lateral epicondyle of the humerus, most commonly the extensor carpi radialis brevis (ECRB).

Etiology

- Repetitive wrist extension and forearm supination
- Microtrauma to the ECRB origin
- Common in:
 - Tennis players
 - Manual laborers (e.g., carpenters, mechanics)
 - Office workers (e.g., typing, mouse use)

Clinical Presentation

- Pain and tenderness over lateral epicondyle
- Pain exacerbated by:
 - Gripping
 - Lifting with pronated forearm
 - Wrist extension against resistance
- Positive special tests:
 - Cozen’s test
 - Maudsley’s test

Diagnosis

- Clinical diagnosis
- Imaging (if needed to rule out other causes):
 - Ultrasound: hypoechoic areas in tendon
 - MRI: tendinosis, partial tearing

Treatment Options

| Treatment Type | Examples | Notes |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Conservative | Rest, ice, NSAIDs, physical therapy | First-line; effective in most cases |
| Bracing | Counterforce brace or wrist splint | Reduces stress on tendon |
| Injections | | |

PRP (platelet-rich plasma) | Corticosteroids = short-term relief;
PRP = possible long-term benefit (mixed evidence) |

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Surgery | Tendon debridement and ECRB release | For refractory cases >6–12 months |
|---------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

Prognosis

- Most patients improve with conservative management
- Symptoms can persist for several months
- Recurrence if overuse continues

See also

- [Medial epicondylitis](#)
- [Extensor carpi radialis brevis](#)
- [Cozen's test](#)

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Last update: **2025/05/09 21:16**

