

Elbow Sprains

Explanation of Diagnosis

An elbow sprain occurs when the ligaments that support the elbow joint are stretched or torn due to excessive force, such as twisting, impact, or hyperextension. Symptoms may include pain, swelling, bruising, and limited range of motion. Mild sprains typically heal with rest, while severe cases may require physical therapy or further intervention.

Specific Work Modifications

- **Avoid** heavy lifting, forceful pushing/pulling, and repetitive gripping motions.
- If typing or using tools, use an ergonomic brace or wrist/elbow support.
- Take frequent breaks to rest the arm and avoid overuse.
- Modify workstation setup to reduce strain (e.g., adjust desk height, use voice-to-text software if applicable).

Specific Activity Modifications

- **Avoid** activities that require strong grip strength, throwing, or weight-bearing through the arm (e.g., tennis, golf, lifting weights).
- For hobbies like painting, playing an instrument, or gardening, use light movements and take breaks to prevent fatigue.
- If engaging in sports, wear a compression sleeve or brace for support.
- Gradually reintroduce activities as pain allows, starting with low-impact movements.

Recommended Supplements

- **Turmeric (Curcumin) 500 mg twice daily** - Helps reduce inflammation.
- **Omega-3 fatty acids (Fish Oil) 1000 mg daily** - Supports joint health and reduces stiffness.
- **Vitamin C 500 mg daily** - Aids in ligament repair and collagen synthesis.
- **Collagen peptides 10 g daily** - Supports connective tissue healing.

Recommended Nutrition and Hydration

Diet Recommendations:

- **Anti-inflammatory foods:** Leafy greens, berries, nuts, and fatty fish (salmon, sardines).
- **Protein-rich foods:** Lean meats, eggs, and legumes to support tissue repair.
- **Collagen-boosting foods:** Bone broth, citrus fruits, and bell peppers.
- **Limit processed foods and excess sugar**, which can increase inflammation.

Hydration Tips:

- Drink **at least 2-3 liters of water daily** to keep tissues hydrated.
- Avoid excessive caffeine and alcohol, which can dehydrate and slow healing.

Home Exercise Prescription

Perform **3-4 times daily** to maintain mobility and aid healing:

1. **Elbow Range of Motion Exercise** - Slowly bend and straighten the elbow **10-15 reps** without resistance.
2. **Wrist Flexion/Extension Stretch** - Hold wrist in a gentle stretch forward and backward for **20-30 seconds, 3 times each direction**.
3. **Forearm Supination/Pronation Exercise** - Rotate the palm up and down **10-15 reps** while keeping the elbow bent.
4. **Isometric Elbow Holds** - Hold a light resistance (or press against a surface) with the forearm for **5 seconds, 10 reps**.
5. **Grip Strength Exercise (if pain-free)** - Use a soft stress ball and squeeze gently **10 reps**.

Avoid high-resistance or weight-bearing exercises until pain subsides.

Helpful Books

1. *"The Arm: Inside the Billion-Dollar Mystery of the Most Valuable Commodity in Sports"* - Jeff Passan
2. *"Foundation: Redefine Your Core, Conquer Back Pain, and Move with Confidence"* - Eric Goodman & Peter Park

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Contact a Key West orthopedic clinic or reach out to Dr. Jason Pirozzolo.