

“I have shamelessly filched this posting from Tom Randall’s blog on a solution for Golfer’s Elbow because it worked for me after only 1 week. This is on top of 2 years of sufferance and dealing with it in the usual ways as Tom has also experienced. Many thanks to Tom and for spreading it around.” Danny

Golfer’s Elbow – A Possible Solution?

Posted (by Tom Randall) on November 23, 2012

Around 2004 I started to climb indoors a lot – as in 4 times a week or more. As you might expect, my grades started to creep upwards but at the very same time I developed a nasty case of Golfer’s Elbow. That deep pain on the inner side of your elbow (the fancy word being medial epicondylitis) which only seems to get deeper and more excruciating the more you lock-off or do pull-ups. Know the feeling?

Like many other climbers I sought the advice of the internet and a series of physios. I tried the usual methods; rest, ice, hot-cold treatment, massage, anti-inflammatory medicine, postural correcting exercises and lots of antagonist work. I must have spent a good £1000 or so seeing different people, buying books and feeding my growing Ibuprofen habit. Unfortunately though, nothing seemed to hit the spot. Every person I asked recommended some kind of combination of the above, but I started to get frustrated as the pain continued to get worse. Eventually I made the hard decision to take some time out from climbing and training as I knew no other solution.

Just as I’d made this decision I coincidentally got talking to one of the GB Senior Team members called Drew Haigh (I was managing the team at the time) about my plight and he showed me an exercise a yoga teacher had showed him for Golfer’s Elbow. Drew sounded really convinced about this “magical stretch” that he had been taught, but I remained sceptical as nothing had worked until this point. I got the beta off Drew at a training session and guess what..... 2 weeks later my Golfer’s Elbow had totally disappeared! I couldn’t believe it. Two years of pain had been removed in 2 weeks.

The Stretch

I have no idea what this exercise is called, but hopefully with the aid of the following photos and a little description some people out there may benefit in the same way as I did. I’ve shown this stretch to a number of people I’ve coached over the years and it has to be said that it’s not always successful – it seems to work best when none of the conventional approaches (physio, antagonists, NSAIDS) work. Give it a try though – you’ll only have wasted a few minutes if it doesn’t work.

The start pose - the position that you’re aiming to hold with your arms is that shown in the picture below. You want your palms facing outwards and for your

elbows to almost touch in the middle – it feels quite awkward to hold this position. You should note that in the correct position your elbows should be about the height of your belly-button and inside the line of your body i.e. arms not lying down the side of your body. Got that so far?



The finish pose – ok, so with that in mind, you now have to perform that same arm positioning, but on the ground lying on your front! This means that you'll be lying on top of your arms and your bodyweight is forcing your arms and elbows into a nice straight/open position. Note that it's really important that you do this exercise on a solid floor (not soft matting) as you don't want to be able to hyper-extend your elbows. In this position you should feel a nice stretch – if it feels painful, then stop! I find looking straight at the ground in front of me or to one side is most comfortable with the neck.



The movements – once you've gained confidence with the initial positioning and you're happy that there's no undue pain, then you can try raising one leg at a time (I do reps of 10) which results in the front of your hip bone pushing

into the back of your forearm giving extra stretch. The leg needs to be raised out 10 inches or so off the ground and I do just 10 reps on each leg. Once done, I get up off the floor shake my arms out, and get back to whatever I was doing 2 minutes earlier!

Below is a quick shot of the back of the forearm to show you the point at which it makes contact with the front of your hip bone once you're lying on top of your arms.



If this helps one person, then it's all worth it! Please do pass on the information if you find it useful and I only came across it by word of mouth from Drew. I owe you big time Drew!

"I owe you Tom – cheers." Danny the Physio