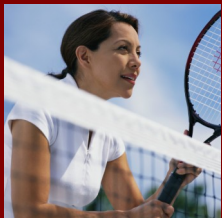


## Tennis

Hands-On-Care is offering specialized tips to help tennis players avoid injury as they prepare for the summer season. From beginners to professionals, tennis elbow, the most common injury in the sport, is seen in approximately one-third of the tennis population.

“Individuals suffering from tennis elbow may report that they have pain at the outer side of the elbow performing activities using the hand or wrist. As a result, daily activities such as typing, ironing, vacuuming, writing



or even lifting a coffee cup may become too painful to perform. For tennis players, some of the causes of tennis elbow can be playing too long or too frequently, poor stroke mechanics with the back hand swing, improper equipment relating to grip size, string tension, racket weight, frame rigidity or the length of the racket.”

Hands-On-Care recommends following these guidelines to avoid tennis elbow injuries:

### *Playing*

· Avoid poor body positioning with the elbow leading the racquet.

**Saba Kamal** has over 18+ years of experience as a clinician. She has worked as an Occupational Therapist and a Certified Hand Therapist. In addition, she did her Fellowship in Hand Therapy from Texas Woman’s University, in Houston with Baylor alliance.

o She has presented several talks at Local and National level conferences (ASHT: American Society of Hand Therapists and IFSHT: International Federation of Societies of Hand Therapists).

o She has contributed to a book on Arthritis, presented to support groups etc.

o She was the President of the California Chapter of ASHT & has won the best chapter award for her term in 2010 & 2011.

o She is a partner/principal in Advanced Rehab Seminars & provides continuing education seminars to other hand & upper extremity therapists nationwide.

## Hands-on-Care

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## Hands-on-Care



Specializing in Shoulder, Elbow, Wrist and Hand Therapy

## Tennis Safety



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## Tennis Safety

- Avoid “wrist flick” motions when striking the ball. Especially during the serve, do not turn the palm down and flick the wrist at impact.
- Avoid striking the ball late. Especially during backhand, strike the ball when it is beside your body and keep your wrist in neutral to slight extension
- In order to correct poor body positioning and stroke mechanics, request instruction or advice from a tennis professional. Strengthen your core muscles, shoulder stabilizers, rotator cuff muscles, and leg muscles to increase the power of your hit using your trunk, shoulders, and lower body.
- Try a two-handed backhand to relieve stress placed on the forearm extensor musculature that originates at the elbow. These are the muscles that are contributing to the pain!
- Stretch and warm up before and after your match and then ice the elbow area well after your match. This will help decrease the chances of inflammation and re-injury.

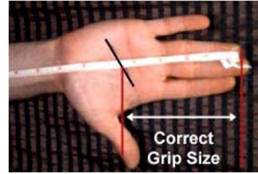
### Equipment

- A smaller head racquet and/or a tightly strung racquet may require more exertion from the forearm musculature. Try a mid-size to larger head racquet in order to provide a larger impact area or “sweet spot” for the ball. A lighter racquet may decrease stress on the arm as well.
- Make sure your grip is not too small. Avoid gripping your racquet too tightly.

- Grip size should be chosen by measuring the distance from the crease of the palm to the tip of the ring finger.
- Professionals suggest string tension be at the manufacturer’s lowest recommendation. Also the string on the frame should be replaced approximately every 6 months.
- Wear a counterforce brace while playing your match. The **counterforce** brace gives external support to the involved muscles and relieves stress on the area.
- Try playing on a clay court rather than asphalt. The slower court surface helps to slow the ball down and lessen the impact on your racquet. Replacing tennis balls regularly also decreases impact related stresses to the arm.

### Other Activities

Our Hand Therapists also warn that “tennis elbow” can be brought on by other repetitive tasks which a person may perform with improper wrist movement. They may use excessive wrist extension using the keyboard or mouse, gardening, and golfing. When typing keep elbow by your side at 90-100 degrees with wrist straight when typing. When lifting, lift with palm up and close to the body.



### Exercise

Perform stretches by keeping the elbow straight, palm facing downward then bend the wrist down, thus pointing the fingers down with the other hand. Hold the position for a count of 10. Perform this stretch often throughout the day. Download a break program if on the computer for a long time to remind of the stretches



Treatment for tennis elbow involves a combination of rest, change of activity, ice, massage and a rehabilitation program that will include instruction in appropriate stretching and



strengthening exercises. You may receive a cortisone shot from the doctor which would help but if the cause is not corrected and you are not doing the necessary exercises the tennis elbow symptoms will return. For rehabilitation and general consultation about prevention techniques, see our certified hand therapist.

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