Fraser Orthopaedic Institute &
Physiotherapy Protocols
403 - 233 Nelson's Crescent New Westminster BC V3L0E4

Lateral Epicondylitis: Conservative Protocol

Initial Evaluation: (Visit 1-5)
Goals:

- Fabricate wrist cock-up splint if indicated
- Patient education regarding anatomy and biomechanics
- Patient education to maintain neutral wrist position and utilizing proximal musculature for lifting
- Patient education regarding motions to avoid and high risk activities
    - Prolonged repetitive grasping, pinching, and wrist movement
    - Prolonged static gripping and pinching
- Instruct patient in home program of wrist and forearm stretching exercises
- Instruct patient in use of ice pack
- Follow-up appointment to be made every 1-2 weeks until Discharge Criteria has been met

Treatment:

- Modalities as indicated to reduce pain/inflammation
- Myofascial treatment to any active trigger points
- Cross-friction massage to musculotendinous origin
- Joint mobilization if patient does not have full active range of motion
- Therapeutic exercises to increase strength of wrist and grip as tolerated
- Home program of gentle wrist and forearm stretching exercises as well as use of ice pack

Visits 5-12
Goals:

- Pain-free active range of motion of elbow/wrist/forearm
- Increased grip strength
- Increased wrist strength (at least 4+/5)

Treatment:

- Continue with modalities as appropriate (no greater than 10 ultrasound or iontophoresis treatments)
- Continue with myofascial treatment if patient continues with active trigger points
- Upgrade strengthening of wrist and grip as tolerated
- Review Self-management
- Job shadow as needed
- Home program of gentle wrist and forearm stretching/strengthening exercises as well as use of ice pack
- Referral back to physician if no progress regarding symptom management after 6 months

Discharge Criteria:

- Elbow, forearm, wrist active range of motion within normal limits
- Able to perform functional activities with mild or lessened pain
- Independent with proper stretching and strengthening
- Patient educated regarding pacing, positioning, and ergonomics
- Patient has adequate knowledge of diagnosis and demonstrates the ability to self-manage symptoms, correct the problem, and minimize recurrence
- Failure to progress
- Failure to comply