



## **\*ADVICE SHEET\***

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# **Elbow Injury**

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Emergency Department  
Morriston Hospital  
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## **How to treat your injured elbow**

Following injury to your elbow it may be swollen and painful. This is because of damage to the soft tissues surrounding your elbow, such as ligaments, tendons and muscles.

### **During the first three days**

It is important to rest your elbow as much as possible to prevent further swelling. You may have been given a sling to help with this. If so it is important that you remove your arm from the sling regularly and move your shoulder to prevent it from stiffening. Also remove when you go to bed.

To help relieve the pain and reduce the swelling, apply frozen peas / crushed ice in a damp tea towel to the painful area. For maximum effect apply for up to 30 minutes every 2 hours. Ice can burn so remove if uncomfortable.

Once the pain and swelling begin to ease, start gently moving your elbow to prevent stiffness.

### **After three days**

If you have not already started to move your elbow it is now essential that you do, to prevent future stiffness and weakness.

**Exercises should be performed slowly moving into mild discomfort but stopping short of pain.**

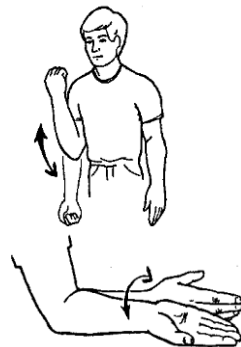
**A guide to the number of repetitions and frequency of exercises is provided, but should be modified according to your pain.**

1. Slowly bend and straighten your elbow as far as possible.

**Repeat up to 10 times every hour.**

2. Tuck your elbow into your side, turn the palm of your hand up then down. Move in each direction as far as possible.

**Repeat up to 10 times every hour.**



You should be able to move your elbow easier each day. As well as exercising your elbow make sure you move your neck, shoulder, wrist and hand through full movement to prevent them stiffening.

As soon as possible resume light activities. In the first few weeks try and avoid carrying heavy objects or anything that forces your elbow into a straight position.

Depending on the severity of your injury it may take between 1-3 months, sometimes longer to recover. Full elbow straightening is often slower to return than elbow bending, and in some cases may always be restricted.

### **For those returning to sport**

Before returning to racquet or contact sport your elbow must be pain free. The movements at your injured elbow should be equal to the other elbow.

**If you need further advice please initially contact your GP, NHS Wales (111) or NHS Direct (0845 46 47).**

**If you feel your injury is not getting better after 10-14 days contact the Emergency department for an appointment on 01792 703428.**

**This advice is for soft tissue injuries only. Only perform these exercises if they do not cause significant pain. If your diagnosis changes these exercises may no longer be suitable.**