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Radial Tunnel Syndrome Exercise Program

To ensure that this exercise program is safe and effective for you, it should be performed under your doctor's supervision. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about which exercises will best help you meet your rehabilitation goals.

Radial tunnel syndrome is a painful condition caused by pressure on a part of the radial nerve – one of the 3 main nerves in your arm. The most common place for compression of the radial nerve is at the elbow where the nerve enters a tight tunnel made by muscle, bone, and tendon. This condition can cause symptoms similar to lateral epicondylitis (tennis elbow) or can occur at the same time as tennis elbow (meaning, you have both conditions).

Purpose of Program

Exercises to help the radial nerve slide through the tunnel at the elbow can improve symptoms. Stretching and strengthening the muscles of the forearm can also help to relieve pain and tenderness.

Following a well-structured conditioning program will help you return to daily activities, as well as sports and other recreational pastimes.

Length of program: This exercise program for radial tunnel syndrome should be continued for 6 to 12 weeks, unless otherwise specified by your doctor, or your occupational or physical therapist. After your recovery, these exercises can be continued as a maintenance program.

Do not ignore pain: You should not feel significant pain during an exercise. If your elbow pain steadily worsens, if the exercises increase the pain, or if the pain does not improve after you have performed the exercises for 6 to 12 weeks, talk to your doctor or physical therapist.

Ask questions: If you are not sure how to do an exercise, or how often to do it, contact your doctor or physical therapist.

Additional Notes from Your Clinician

Exercise Program for Radial Tunnel Syndrome

STRETCHING EXERCISES

1. Wrist Extension Stretch

Repetitions

5 reps,
4x a day

Days per week

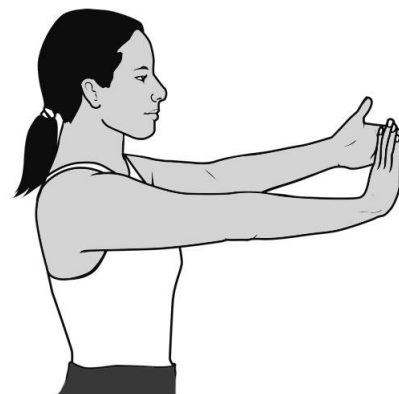
5 to 7

Equipment needed: None

Additional instructions: This stretch should be done throughout the day, especially before activity. After recovery, this stretch should be included as part of a warm-up to activities that involve gripping, such as gardening, tennis, and golf.

Step-by-step directions

- Straighten your arm and bend your wrist back as if signaling someone to “stop.”
- Use your opposite hand to apply gentle pressure across the palm and pull it toward you until you feel a stretch on the inside of your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.



Tip Do not lock your elbow.

2. Wrist Flexion Stretch

Repetitions

5 reps,
4x a day

Days per week

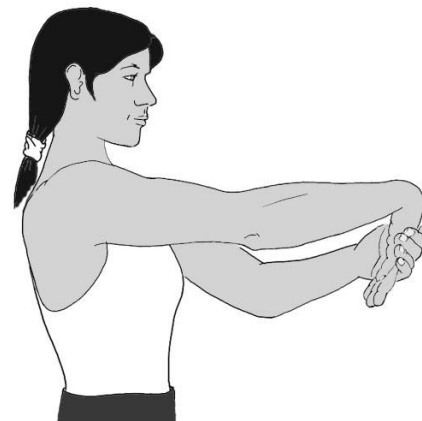
5 to 7

Equipment needed: None

Additional instructions: This stretch should be done throughout the day, especially before activity. After recovery, this stretch should be included as part of a warm-up to activities that involve gripping, such as gardening, tennis, and golf.

Step-by-step directions

- Straighten your arm with your palm facing down and bend your wrist so that your fingers point down.
- Gently pull your hand toward your body until you feel a stretch on the outside of your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.



Tip Do not lock your elbow.

AAOS does not endorse any treatments, procedures, products, or physicians referenced herein. This information is provided as an educational service and is not intended to serve as medical advice. Anyone seeking specific orthopaedic advice or assistance should consult his or her orthopaedic surgeon.

Exercise Program for Radial Tunnel Syndrome

STRETCHING EXERCISES

3. Wrist Supination

Repetitions

5 reps,
4x a day

Days per week

5 to 7

Equipment needed: None

Additional instructions: This stretch will help with activities that require a “palm up” position, gripping an object, and/or twisting (such as when using a screwdriver).



Step-by-step directions

- Bend your elbow at the side of your body with your palm facing the ceiling.
- Use your opposite hand to hold at your wrist and gently turn your forearm further into the palm-up position until you feel a stretch.
- Hold the stretch for 15 seconds.
- Repeat 5 times, then perform this stretch on the other arm.

Tip

Be sure to hold at your wrist – not your hand – to turn your forearm.

Exercise Program for Radial Tunnel Syndrome

STRETCHING EXERCISES

4. Radial Nerve Glides

Repetitions

5 - 8 reps,
2-4x a day

Equipment needed: None

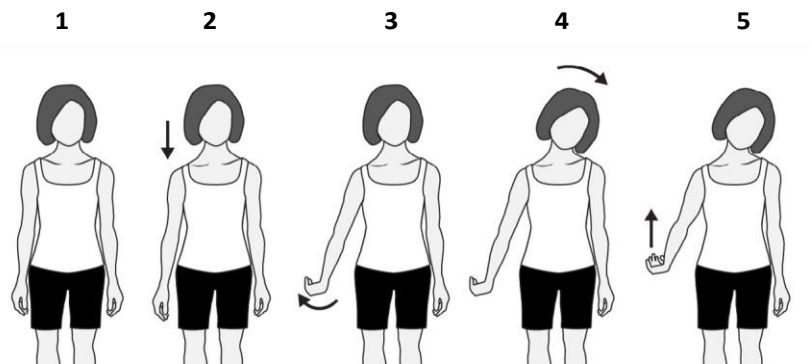
Additional instructions: Nerve glides help to restore nerve motion. This exercise will help the radial nerve glide normally through structures that are putting pressure on the nerve.

Days per week

5 to 7

Step-by-step directions

- Stand comfortably with your arms loose at your sides. (1)
- Drop your shoulder down and reach your fingers toward the floor. (2)
- Internally rotate your arm (thumb toward your body) and flex your wrist with the palm up. (3)
- Gently tilt your head away from the side you are stretching. (4)
- Extend your shoulder backward and raise your arm away from your body as you continue to flex your wrist and tilt your head. (5)
- Hold each position of the glide for 3 to 5 seconds.



Tip Stretch only to the point where you feel tension.