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## **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