

ELBOW SPRAIN

What is an elbow sprain?

An elbow sprain is an injury that causes a stretch or tear of one or more of the ligaments in the elbow joint. Ligaments are strong bands of tissue that connect bones at the joint.

Sprains may be graded 1, 2, or 3 depending on their severity:

- grade 1 sprain: pain with minimal damage to the ligaments
- grade 2 sprain: mild ligament damage and mild looseness of the joint
- grade 3 sprain: complete tearing of the ligament, and the joint is very loose or unstable

Sometimes sprains are just classified as mild moderate or severe, depending on the amount of ligament damage.

How does it occur?

An elbow sprain can occur from a fall onto your elbow or onto your outstretched arm. It may also happen if your arm and elbow is twisted or hyperextended.

What are the symptoms?

You will have pain, swelling and difficulty bending and straightening your elbow and rotating your forearm. Your elbow will be tender to touch.

How is it diagnosed?

Your provider will review your symptoms, ask you how the injury occurred and examine your elbow. He or she may order an X-ray.

How is it treated?

An elbow sprain is treated with a sling to keep the elbow from moving while it is painful and swollen. Sometimes a splint is used. You should apply ice packs to your elbow for 20 to 30 minutes 3-4 times day for 2 to 3 days or until the pain and swelling goes away. You can put the ice packs in the sling. You should sleep with your elbow elevated on a pillow. You can take an anti-inflammatory medicine, such as ibuprofen, or another medication prescribed by your provider. You will be given rehabilitation exercises by your

provider. If severe ligament damage has occurred, surgery may be needed.

How long will the effects last?

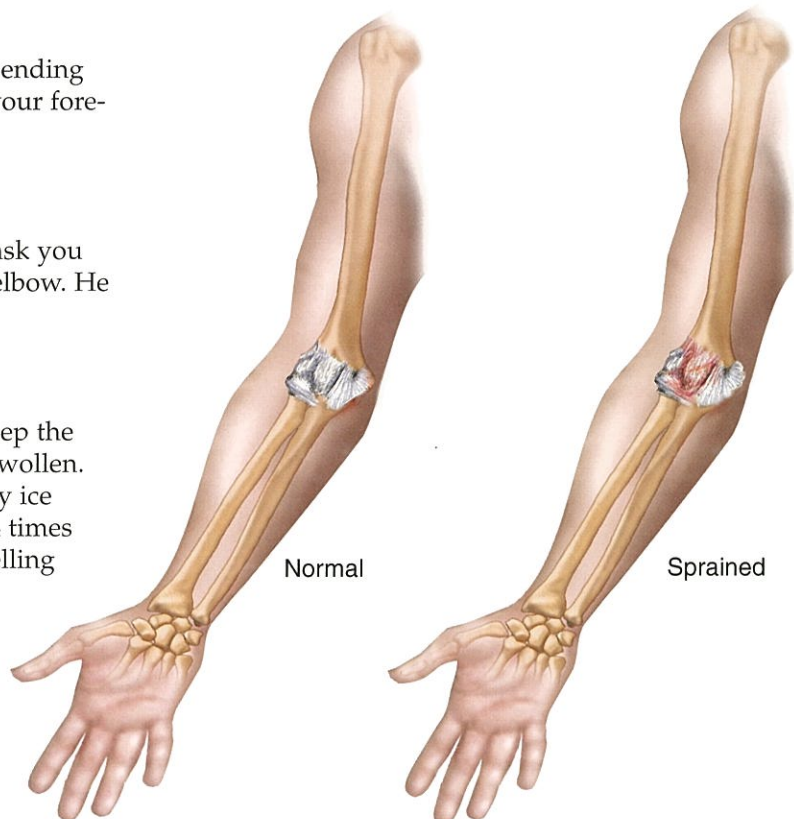
The effects of an elbow sprain usually last 3 to 6 weeks.

When can I return to my normal activities?

Everyone recovers from an injury at a different rate. Return to your activities will be determined by how soon your elbow recovers, not by how many days or weeks it has been since your injury has occurred. The goal of rehabilitation is to return you to your normal activities as soon as is safely possible. If you return too soon you may worsen your injury.

You may return to your activities when your elbow has full range of motion without pain and has the same strength as the uninjured side.

ELBOW SPRAIN

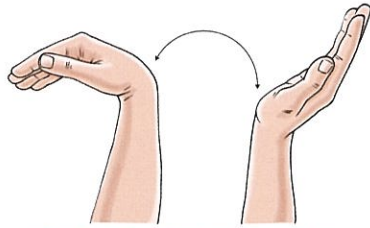


ELBOW SPRAIN REHABILITATION EXERCISES

You may do the stretching exercises right away. You may do the strengthening exercises when stretching is nearly painless.

Stretching exercises

ELBOW/ARM



WRIST ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION

1. WRIST ACTIVE RANGE OF MOTION: Flexion and extension: Bend your wrist forward and backward as far as you can. Do 3 sets of 10.

2. FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION: With your elbow bent 90°, turn your palm upward and hold for 5 seconds. Slowly turn your palm downward and hold for 5 seconds. Make sure you keep your elbow at your side and bent 90° throughout this exercise. Do 3 sets of 10.



FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION



3. ACTIVE ELBOW FLEXION AND EXTENSION: Gently bring your palm up toward your shoulder and bend your elbow as far as you can. Then straighten your elbow as far as you can 10 times. Do 3 sets of 10.

ACTIVE ELBOW FLEXION AND EXTENSION

Strengthening exercises

4. WRIST FLEXION: Hold a can or hammer handle in your hand with your palm facing up. Bend your wrist upward. Slowly lower the weight and return to the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually increase the weight of the can or weight you are holding.



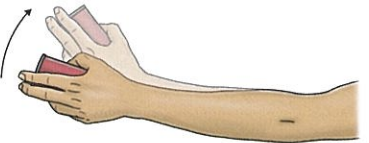
WRIST FLEXION

5. WRIST EXTENSION: Hold a soup can or hammer handle in your hand with your palm facing down. Slowly bend your wrist upward. Slowly lower the weight down into the starting position. Do 3 sets of 10. Gradually increase the weight of the object you are holding.



WRIST EXTENSION

6. WRIST RADIAL DEVIATION STRENGTHENING: Put your wrist in the sideways position with your thumb up. Hold a can of soup or a hammer handle and gently bend your wrist up, with the thumb reaching toward the ceiling. Slowly lower to the starting position. Do not move your forearm throughout this exercise. Do 3 sets of 10.

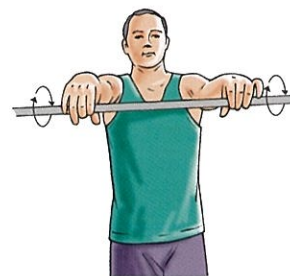


WRIST RADIAL DEVIATION STRENGTHENING

7. FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION STRENGTHENING: Hold a soup can or hammer handle in your hand and bend your elbow 90°. Slowly rotate your hand with your palm upward and then palm down. Do 3 sets of 10.



FOREARM PRONATION AND SUPINATION STRENGTHENING



WRIST EXTENSION (WITH BROOM HANDLE)

8. WRIST EXTENSION (WITH BROOM HANDLE): Stand up and hold a broom handle in both hands. With your arms at shoulder level, elbows straight and palms down, roll the broom handle backward in your hand. Do 3 sets of 10.