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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

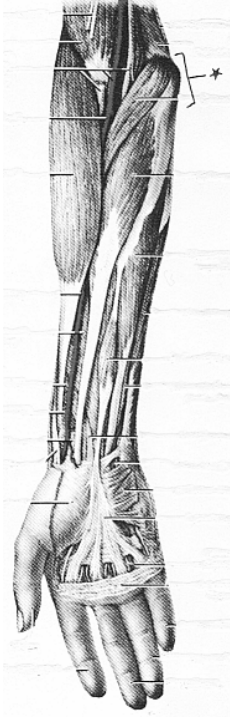
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## Sore Forearm?

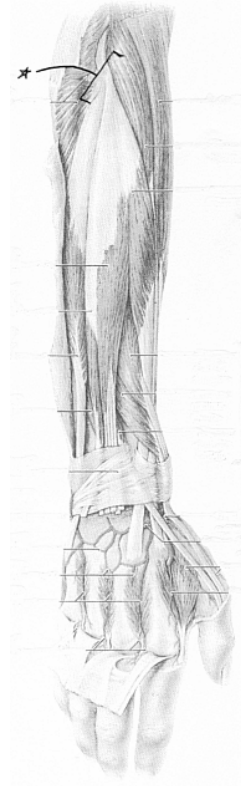
No matter what your occupation or preferred sport, your forearm can be easily injured. I am not talking about traumatic injuries. I am referring to "repetitive strain injuries", where repetitive light or heavy activities irritate or strain the muscles and tendons of your forearm.

More commonly, the muscles and tendons at the outside of your forearm (wrist extensors) can become inflamed. This occurs when your wrist is repetitively or continually extended backwards, such as using a computer mouse improperly or the upstroke of painting with a paintbrush. These muscles all attach to the bony bump at the outside of the elbow (see diagram). This is often referred to as "tennis elbow". Less commonly, the muscles and tendons at the inside of the forearm (wrist flexors) can become inflamed. This occurs when you are pulling on objects firmly or repetitively, such as pulling on wrenches or the down stroke of painting with a paintbrush. These muscles all attach to the bony bump at the inside of the elbow (see diagram). This is often referred to as "golfers elbow".

When either of these groups of muscles and tendons is inflamed, the forearm will feel weak. The outside or inside of the elbow will be very sore to touch and it will ache even while resting. If you try to use the forearm when the inflammation is severe, you may even feel sharp pains at the elbow. I have examined patients in my office whose elbow and forearm muscles were so sore that they could not even pick up their morning cup of coffee. Luckily, most of these patients responded well to conservative care. It is also very important to try to identify what repetitive or forceful wrist/forearm activities you are doing that are causing the problem in the first place. For information on the prevention and treatment of this problem, be sure to read next week's article.



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