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

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## Treating A Sore Forearm

Last week I discussed how repetitive or forceful use of the muscles in your forearm could lead to tendonitis occurring at the inside or outside of the elbow. I included diagrams to show where the affected muscles attach. That article is available in the "weekly articles" section of our website: [www.merrittchiro.com](http://www.merrittchiro.com). As promised, this week I will demonstrate some stretching exercises and other measures to help prevent this from happening. I will also explain how I treat this in my office.

Stretching the muscles that attach to the inside of the elbow is quite easy to do. When these muscles contract or shorten, they flex the wrist (the palm of your hand moves toward the front surface of the forearm). Therefore, you must move the wrist in the opposite direction (extending or bending the wrist backward) to stretch them (see top diagram). To do this, simply hold your left arm out straight in front of you with your palm facing downward. Then extend your wrist backwards. With your right hand, grasp your left hand and fingers and slowly bend the right wrist backwards until you feel a stretch in the forearm. Do not pull too hard or too quickly, particularly if you have arthritis in your wrists.

Stretching the muscles that attach to the outside of the elbow is also easily done. When these muscles contract or shorten, they extend the wrist backward (the back of the hand moves toward the back of the forearm). Therefore, you must move the wrist in the opposite direction (flexing or bending the wrist forward) to stretch them (see lower diagram). To do this, simply hold your left arm out straight in front of you with your palm facing downward. Then flex your wrist downward. With your right hand, grasp your left hand and slowly bend the right wrist downward and towards yourself until you feel a stretch in the forearm. Again, do not pull too hard or too quickly, particularly if you have arthritis in your wrists.

If either of these muscle groups becomes irritated or inflamed, they will be sore and very tight. In my office, we do "muscle stripping". Using mild pressure to massage the muscle in the same direction as the individual muscle fibers travel, I remove the spasm or knots. Sound confusing? This is the same idea as sanding a piece of wood only in the direction of the grain. To help remove the inflammation and further assist in decreasing the muscle spasm, I use mild electrical current (interferential current) to make

the muscles contract lightly and repetitively. To help decrease the pressure or forces that these muscles must endure when you do your work or activities, a specifically designed strap or band can be worn on the forearm, two to three inches down from the elbow. This supportive device and others that perform a similar function can be purchased at most drug stores.

If you have any further questions, please email me or stop by the office.

