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THE ARM DOC  
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## Therapeutic Exercise Program for Radial Tunnel Syndrome by Orthoinfo

*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 the radial nerve – one of the three 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.

### **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 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

*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.*

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**Introduction 1**



## Exercise Program for Radial Tunnel Syndrome

### STRETCHING EXERCISES

#### 1. Wrist Extension Stretch

**Equipment needed:** None

**S**

• reps,  
4x a day

**Days per week**

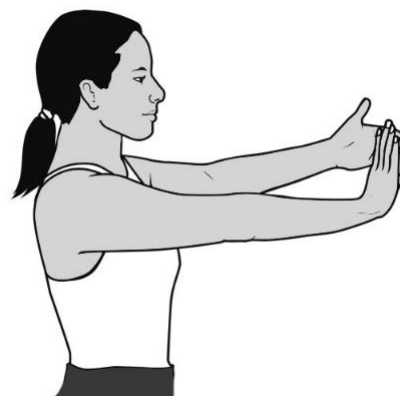
5 to 7

**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

**Equipment needed:** None

**S**

• reps,  
4x a day

**Days per week**

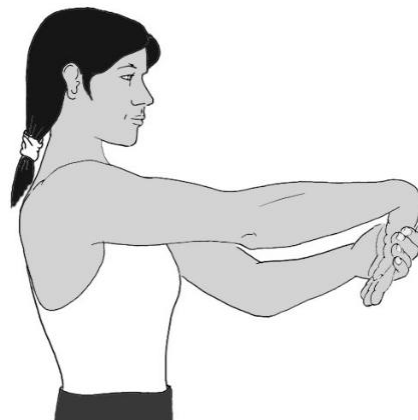
5 to 7

**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.



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**Exercises Page 1**



## Exercise Program for Radial Tunnel Syndrome

### STRETCHING EXERCISES

#### 3. Wrist Supination

**Equipment needed:** None

**S**

• reps,  
4x a day

**Days per week**

5 to 7

**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

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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

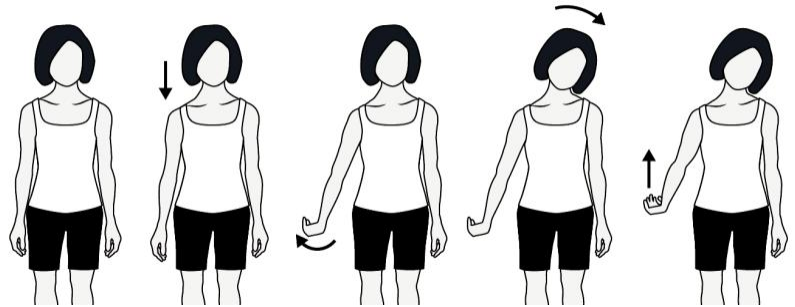


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### Step-by-step directions

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



**Tip** Stretch only to the point where you feel tension.



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