

Fitness & Sports

Preventing common elbow problems

By Staff Sgt. Tony Milunas
Health and Wellness Center

"I have pain in my elbow," or "Sometimes I have pain that goes into my wrist and at times, I have numbness, tingling or decreased strength in my elbow, wrist and fingers."

These symptoms may have just described some of the most common complaints of the hardest-working joint in the entire body - the elbow.

The elbow is a very complex hinge joint. It allows for many normal activities at home and work. Because of the enormous amount of time spent using the elbow, it can be injured very easily. Common every-day tasks that may be taken for granted can cause multiple "micro-traumas," such as picking up children or lifting boxes at work.

Playing in a sport that repeatedly uses the elbow, turning a screwdriver, resting elbows on a table or bumping the back of elbows can also cause these micro traumas. Some of these activities may eventually produce a very painful joint problem and could cause numbness in the fingers.

The four common elbow problems are tennis elbow (lateral epicondylitis), cubital tunnel, bursitis and golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis).

■ **Tennis elbow**, the most common complaint, is the strained or inflamed muscles of the primary wrist movers. These muscles aid in grip strength and

lifting.

■ **Cubital Tunnel** is the inflammation of, or compression of the ulnar nerve. The ulnar nerve passes through the back of the elbow ("funny bone") and goes into the small finger and half of the ring finger.

■ **Bursitis** is the inflammation of the fluid-filled sack, or "bursa," on the back of the elbow.

■ **Golfer's elbow** commonly affects the pronator muscles along with the primary wrist movers.

All of these symptoms can often be treated very simply by a doctor or occupational/physical therapy clinics. However, there are many ways to prevent these symptoms from ever happening.

Remember what mom said, "Don't lean on the table." Every time the elbow is placed on a hard surface, the ulnar nerve can be

injured as it passes through the elbow. Be careful to not repeatedly bump the back of the elbow during activities. Move things out of the way, wear a pad or place a pad on the back of the elbow if it does hurt.

Change elbow lifting techniques. Good lifting techniques for the back are the same for the elbow. Keep elbows at a 90-degree angle, close in to the body and wrist neutral. Neutral wrist position is when palms are side-ways to the body, not palm up or palm down.

Remember with any activities at home or work, it is important to warm up the muscles. Performing gentle range-of-motion exercises ensures muscles are warm and ready to go. Be sure to not cause pain with any exercises.

If an elbow problem exists, contact a primary care manager for a referral to the physical therapy clinic.



Sports line

Expo: The CAFB Air Expo 2000 and the Charleston Running Club are sponsoring "Race on the Runway," a 5K run and 5K fitness walk, Sept. 30, 8:30 a.m. and 8:40 a.m., respectively.

The cost to register is \$10 for the run and \$7 for the walk. Entries are non-refundable and must be postmarked before Sept. 20. Late registration will be \$15 on the day of the race, 7-8:10 a.m.

For more information, contact the Fitness and Sports Center at 963-3347 or 963-3349.

Round dancing: Round dancing is great exercise and a lot of fun.

Many local military retirees are members of a round dancing group called the Meri-Go-Rounds. Classes meet on Monday nights and continue throughout the fall and winter months.

For more information, call Jack or Genie Whetsell at 747-5431 or Don or Nancy Lovelace at 797-6326.

Softball tourney: The 437th Supply Squadron is hosting the annual East Coast "Supply" Softball Tournament. The tournament is for members of supply squadrons throughout the East Coast.

Round robin games continue today to determine the seeds for the double-elimination tournament Saturday.

Youth Sports offers activities

By Staff Sgt. Michael Duhe
437 AW Public Affairs

The Charleston AFB Youth Center is offering a full calendar of sports and activities for children this fall.

Soccer, one of the most popular youth sports, begins Oct. 15. More than 200 children have signed up already to participate. Youth Sports director Don McArthur said coaches are needed.

"It's important everyone understand that all of our 8-year-old and under programs are instructional," he said. "Some people don't volunteer to coach because they think they have to know a lot about the sport, but motivation and role modeling are what it takes to coach."

Charleston AFB will host the local NFL Gatorade Punt, Pass and Kick competition Oct. 21 for boys and girls ages 8-15. Registration is free. McArthur said volunteers from the 437th Maintenance Squadron, who help organize and run the event, contribute to the program's success each year.

Basketball registration begins Oct. 16 and teams will form by Dec. 7, according to McArthur. Games will be played from Jan. 5-Feb. 28.

For more information, or to volunteer to coach a youth sports team, call the Youth Center at 963-5684.

Going the distance

Celeste Rodriguez and Kyle Weeks, both members of the 437th Communications Squadron, begin a morning run at the base fitness trail in preparation for the 4th Annual Air Force Marathon Saturday. Fourteen runners from Charleston AFB will compete in this weekend's 26.2 mile race at Wright Patterson AFB, Ohio, in both individual and relay competition.

Photo by Senior Airman Jason Smith



'Cowgirls' lose again!

By The Swami
Pigskin Prognosticator

Week two is in the books with Matthew Winters the winner.

Winters had a record of 12-3 along with John Woodruff, but only missed the tiebreaker by one point. Woodruff has been talking his usual trash about beating the Swami. This guy has too much time on his hands. Get a job! Congrats to Winters for beating out Woodruff. The Swami had a respectable 9-6 record.

How did you like the way the "Cowgirls" snatched defeat from the jaws of victory? I fell out of my recliner laughing. Wait until Monday night when they take a beating from the Redskins.

Week Four

Name/Phone # : _____
Comments: _____

Sunday, Sept. 24

Cincinnati Bengals @ Baltimore Ravens
Detroit Lions @ Chicago Bears
New England Patriots @ Miami Dolphins
Philadelphia Eagles @ New Orleans Saints
St. Louis Rams @ Atlanta Falcons
San Francisco 49ers @ Dallas Cowboys
Tennessee Titans @ Pittsburgh Steelers
Green Bay Packers @ Arizona Cardinals
Cleveland Browns @ Oakland Raiders
Kansas City Chiefs @ Denver Broncos
New York Jets @ Tampa Bay Buccaneers
Seattle Seahawks @ San Diego Chargers
Washington Redskins @ New York Giants
Monday night
Jacksonville Jaguars @ Indianapolis Colts

Monday Night Total Points _____

SWAMI'S SCORE: 43

Submit picks by Friday, Sept. 22—1600 hrs.
Send to airlift.dispatch@charleston.af.mil
Or drop off @ Public Affairs, bldg.1600