Lateral Epicondylitis: Conservative Protocol

Initial Evaluation: (Visit 1-5)
Goals:
• Fabricate wrist cock-up splint if indicated
• Patient education regarding anatomy and biomechanics
• Patient education to maintain neutral wrist position and utilizing proximal musculature for lifting
• Patient education regarding motions to avoid and high risk activities
  o Prolonged repetitive grasping, pinching, and wrist movement
  o Prolonged static gripping and pinching
• Instruct patient in home program of wrist and forearm stretching exercises
• Instruct patient in use of ice pack
• Follow-up appointment to be made every 1-2 weeks until Discharge Criteria has been met

Treatment:
• Modalities as indicated to reduce pain/inflammation
• Myofascial treatment to any active trigger points
• Cross-friction massage to musculotendinous origin
• Joint mobilization if patient does not have full active range of motion
• Therapeutic exercises to increase strength of wrist and grip as tolerated
• Home program of gentle wrist and forearm stretching exercises as well as use of ice pack

Visits 5-12
Goals:
• Pain-free active range of motion of elbow/wrist/forearm
• Increased grip strength
• Increased wrist strength (at least 4+/5)

Treatment:
• Continue with modalities as appropriate (no greater than 10 ultrasound or iontophoresis treatments)
• Continue with myofascial treatment if patient continues with active trigger points
• Upgrade strengthening of wrist and grip as tolerated
• Review Self-management
• Job shadow as needed
• Home program of gentle wrist and forearm stretching/strengthening exercises as well as use of ice pack
• Referral back to physician if no progress regarding symptom management after 6 months

Discharge Criteria:
• Elbow, forearm, wrist active range of motion within normal limits
• Able to perform functional activities with mild or lessened pain
• Independent with proper stretching and strengthening
• Patient educated regarding pacing, positioning, and ergonomics
• Patient has adequate knowledge of diagnosis and demonstrates the ability to self-manage symptoms, correct the problem, and minimize recurrence
• Failure to progress
• Failure to comply