



# Tri State Hand and Occupational Therapy, Inc.

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## Expert Help for Thumb, Elbow, and Shoulder Pain

*New Technologies and Programs for Thumb, Elbow, and Shoulder Pain—  
We Are Pain Experts*

We've had good success dealing with pain in the thumb, elbow, and shoulder. Our practice has been able to move forward in dealing with these problems more quickly and effectively, using new programs.

Let's begin with the thumb:

### **Dealing with Thumb Pain**

Regardless of what you do for a living, how you have fun, or what you do to relax, your hands are a key part of getting things done.

Our thumbs, especially, allow us to pinch, grasp, and manipulate very small objects. So, what do you do when there is pain in your thumbs that prevents you from doing your everyday activities?

There are new options, beginning with painless techniques, that can allow you to regain function with minimal time and effort.



The new techniques of dynamic thumb stabilization includes exercises that strengthen the very small muscles around the unstable thumb joint. This will, in turn, place the thumb in the proper alignment, decreasing pain and increasing functional use of the hand. Small splints can be made to stabilize the thumb while allowing you to complete your daily chores and work.

Although thumb pain may be frustrating and often debilitating, there is hope to regain your thumb function! With the proper instruction from TriState Hand Therapy, you can be on your way to a "thumbs up" day!

### **Elbow Pain Relief**

Have you ever had elbow pain that simply would not go away? An ache so bad that even picking up a coffee cup can be painful? If this persists over a period of months, it is likely no longer tendonitis (inflammation) but tendonosis. Tendonosis is when the tendon actually starts to break down and degenerate; the tendon can actually fray!

The problem is due to a lack of circulation to the elbow. The outside part of the elbow has a poor blood supply that gets worse with repetitive activity such as factory work. If you wait too



**...exercises can stabilize the thumb and can reduce pain!**

**...increasing blood supply to the elbow can reduce pain from tennis elbow!**



200 Glenn Street, Suite 200, Cumberland, MD 21502  
(301) 759-4263

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long to treat it, the tendon can continue to break down and can irritate a nerve that goes to the back of the wrist, thumb, and index finger.

We use a program of stretching and simple exercises that really work. We also strengthen the shoulder, as a weak shoulder can be a contributing factor, and we use Anodyne Infrared Light Therapy to restore circulation to the damaged tendon tissue. After an average of 6 weeks of therapy, patients regain their strength and are able to work with their arm and hand again without difficulty.

### **Relief for Shoulder Pain**

Do you have shoulder pain? Does it hurt, especially when you

reach overhead or sleep on your shoulder? If you have any of these symptoms, you may have a rotator cuff shoulder problem. It may be due to the arm and shoulder bones pinching a muscle in the rotator cuff (known as impingement syndrome).

The rotator cuff is a collection of muscles and joints in the shoulder which help hold things together and power the shoulder for activities like throwing a ball, hammering, and lifting, especially overhead. The movement of the shoulder is very flexible; you can reach your arm all the way behind your back (and it shouldn't hurt!). All this flexibility in the shoulder

means it can easily be injured.

What can be done? First, we try to reduce inflammation of the shoulder. We use ultrasound with cortisone cream, ice water-filled pressure cuffs, and electrical stimulation. We also begin to work on your ability to bring your shoulder back. (Don't worry, it's painless!)

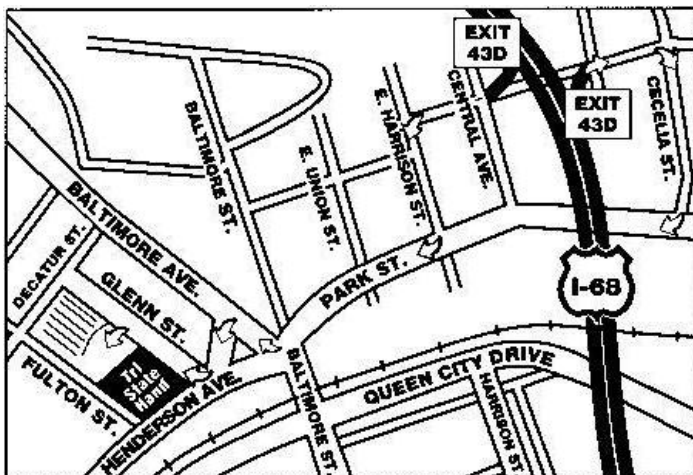
Once the pain is under control, we begin strengthening in a way that helps improve the alignment of the shoulder and keeps the injury from happening again.

**Call the pain experts today at  
(301) 759-4263 and  
get some relief! Try therapy first!**

### **TIPS**

- If you get pain in your thumb, do not try to squeeze a ball to make it better—this will actually have the opposite affect of making it worse.
- If you have elbow pain that persists for longer than 6 weeks, see your doctor or give us a call. Waiting may make it very difficult to get rid of the pain.
- Shoulder problems are aggravated by overhead activities; if these hurt your shoulder, get some help before it becomes completely inflamed.

If it's fairly early on (within the first 6 weeks of pain), try ice wrapped in a moist towel and placed over the area for 15-minutes at a time, 3 times a day. If the pain has been present for longer than 6 weeks, try some moist heat for 15-minutes 3 times a day.



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Suite 200 (2nd Floor)  
Cumberland, MD 21502

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