

# How the VA Rates Elbow Conditions

Regulatory Source: 38 CFR § 4.71a – Diagnostic Codes 5205–5213

VA Source: <https://ecfr.gov>

## Summary:

Elbow conditions such as arthritis, epicondylitis (tennis/golfer's elbow), or limited motion are rated by how much range of motion is lost and whether there's stiffness, pain, or deformity. Ankylosis leads to the highest ratings.

## VA Rating Table:

Rating	Explanation
10%	Flexion limited to 100° or extension limited to 45°, or painful motion confirmed by medical exam. Mild arthritis or inflammation.
20%	Flexion limited to 90° or extension limited to 75°. May include intermittent swelling or pain during repetitive use.
30%–40%	Moderate limitation of movement in both flexion and extension. Recurrent swelling, crepitus, or significant functional impairment.
50%–60%	Severe ankylosis or fixed position of the elbow joint. Loss of full rotation or significant deformity present.

## Required Evidence:

- Diagnosis of elbow arthritis, tendonitis, or limited motion
- Range of motion testing (flexion, extension, supination, pronation)
- X-rays or MRIs showing joint damage or bone spurs
- C&P; exam noting swelling, popping, tenderness, or deformity
- Personal statements on repetitive use limitations (lifting, pushing)

## Pro Tip:

Motion loss must be documented with a goniometer in degrees. If pain starts before full motion is achieved, note it—it still qualifies for a rating even without full limitation.