

# Lateral condylar mass fracture of the elbow

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Lateral condylar mass fractures of the elbow are easily missed and often considered benign as there is often only a small flake of bone visible. This thin sliver of metaphyseal bone on the lateral side of the elbow is very deceptive. Do not underestimate the significance of this injury ( Figure 32.29 ). Richard von Volkmann , 1830–1889, Professor of Surgery , Halle, Germany . ment. If stable, non-operative treatment is acceptable. If unstable, anatomical reduction and fixation should be attempted to avoid complications. Unstable fractures are suggested by significant soft-tissue swelling, by fracture displacement of more than 2 mm or by the fracture being visible on both anteroposterior and lateral views of the elbow . Unstable fractures require anatomical reduction and rigid fixation with K-wires or screw fixation to avoid displacement and complications. Avascular necrosis of the capitellum and non-union of the lateral condyle lead to the so-called 'fish tail' deformity .

(a) Figure 32.29 Lateral condylar mass fracture. (a) The metaphyseal fracture. (b) The yellow shows the shape of the distal humerus, including the cartilagi

nous analogue, and the red shows the true extent of the injury (i.e. a significant intra-articular fracture).

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