

DEFINITION:

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is defined as a common, painful condition caused by compression of the median nerve. As the disorder progresses, numbness and pain develop.¹

Do you experience any of these symptoms at home and/or at work?

- Night numbness and tingling in one or both hands?
- Dropping objects for no reason?
- Decrease strength during tasks requiring power or prolonged grip?

If answered yes to one or more of these symptoms, tell your doctor. There are conservative treatment options available.

1. Greenspan, J. Carpal tunnel syndrome. A common but treatable cause of wrist pain. *Postgraduate Medicine* 1988; 84 (Nov): 34-43.

Treatment Options

1. Education: Understanding what CTS is, and how to prevent it from occurring or worsening is the best treatment currently available.
2. Splint. You may be given a splint to wear. The splint will position your wrist straight to decrease pressure on the median nerve.
3. Nerve Glide Exercises. Nerve gliding exercises may help improve the transmission of the nerve (see back of this sheet for illustration).
4. Medication. Anti-inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs) and vitamin B6 (pyridoxine) are often given to reduce inflammation, and may decrease your symptoms.
5. Injection. Steroidal injection into the carpal tunnel may be done to locally reduce the inflammation.
6. Surgery. Surgery for CTS involves cutting the volar carpal ligament which will relieve the compression on the median nerve (see back of this sheet for illustration).

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME



Irwin Army Community Hospital

Occupational Therapy Service

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Consult Required

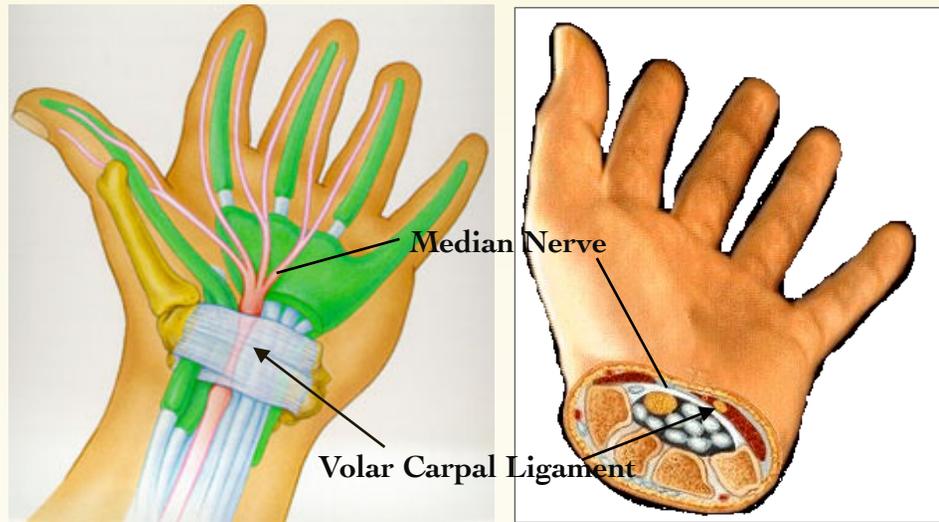


Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

If your occupation, leisure activities or self-care activities require you to repetitively bend or extend your wrist, you may experience carpal tunnel syndrome. Keeping your wrist straight should help you to decrease your symptoms

Anatomy

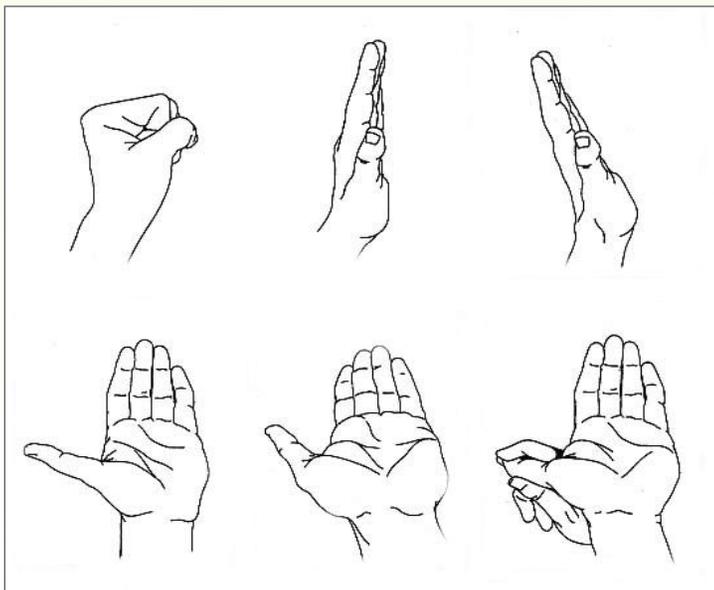
The sensory branch of the Median Nerve gives you the sensation to the palm side of your thumb, index, middle, and sometimes 1/2 of your ring finger. It also innervates the tips of your index, middle and 1/2 of the ring fingers on the back of your hand. The volar carpal ligaments lay directly over the median nerve.



Carpal Tunnel Release

If you and your doctor decide surgery is necessary, a Carpal Tunnel Release may be performed.

The release involves the volar carpal ligament to relieve the pressure on the median nerve.



Do ___ repetitions; ___ times per day.

- 1. Make a tight fist, and count 1,2,3,4,5**
- 2. Straighten your hand, and count 1,2,3,4,5**
- 3. With your hand straight, bring your wrist back into extension, and count 1,2,3,4,5**
- 4. With your hand and wrist in extension, extend your thumb, and count 1,2,3,4,5**
- 5. With your hand, wrist and thumb extended, place your hand palm up (supinated) and count 1,2,3,4,5**
- 6. With your hand palm up, stretch your thumb and count 1,2,3,4,5**