

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome



Introduction

- Thank you for coming to the Carpal Tunnel Class.
- We hope you take away some useful information.
- Questions are welcome.
- If you would like to talk to a therapist about your specific symptoms or concerns, we will be happy to speak with you at end of the class. 😊

What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or CTS?

- CTS is a common condition affecting the hand and wrist.
- It involves one of the main nerves in the hand, called the Median nerve.
- This nerve travels through a tight tunnel (made of bone and ligament) in your wrist.
- The tendons that bend your fingers also go through this tunnel.
- The Median nerve can become irritated or compressed within the tunnel.



What are the signs and symptoms?

These can vary from person to person. Common symptoms are:

- Wrist and hand pain. Can travel up the arm.
- Pins and needles/tingling in the thumb, index, middle and half of the ring finger.
- Numbness or reduced sensation in the same fingers.
- Weakness/reduced grip strength.
- Dropping things, difficulty with gripping or holding objects.



Night symptoms

- People often experience worse symptoms at night.
- This is because most people sleep with their wrists in a bent position, which increases compression or pressure on the nerve.
- You may wake up with a numb, tingling or painful hand.
- Night pain usually settles once the hand has been moved or shaken.

Treatment Options

- Sometimes CTS will improve on its own over time.
- If not, self management can help reduce symptoms in some people.
- There is a group of patients that will go on to need a cortisone injection.
- If that does not work, a surgical release of the ligament over the tunnel may be considered.



Self Management

- Night splints can be worn to keep your wrists straight. Make sure the metal bar is adjusted so that it is flat, to make sure your wrist is not tilted backwards.
- Activity modification: Try to avoid or adapt activities that bring on your symptoms eg heavy gripping, holding the phone. Use your other hand where possible.



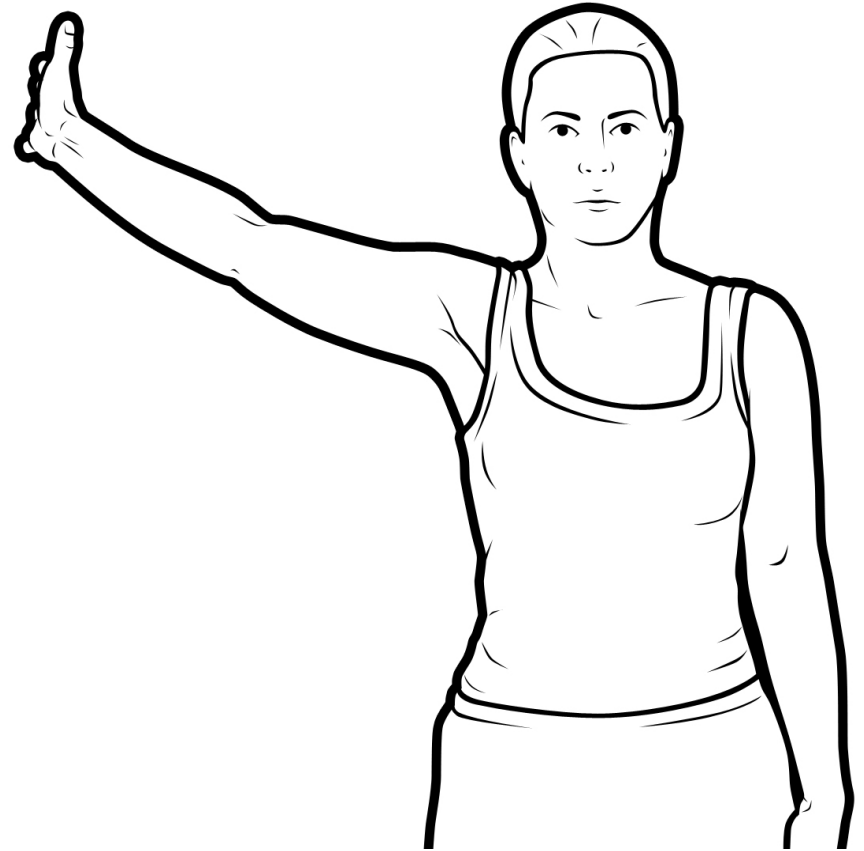
Self Management

- Pacing: Take regular breaks from activities that provoke your symptoms.
- Get your computer station ergonomically checked if possible, or look into buying an upright mouse or ergonomic keyboard.
- Nerve Glide exercises, or nerve flossing.



Nerve Gliding Exercises

- We will now go through some nerve gliding exercises.
- Some people find these help to manage their symptoms.
- They shouldn't be painful, but you may feel some stretching, tension or mild symptoms coming on.
- Some are for just for the hand and wrist and some are for the whole arm.
- If your experience pain or your symptoms get worse after doing them, stop.



Things to check and monitor

- Always seek help if your symptoms become more frequent, severe or constant.
- There are two signs that show the nerve is becoming more seriously compressed.
 1. Permanent numbness.
 2. Muscle wasting in the thumb/palm.
- These two symptoms can indicate that permanent damage to the nerve may be occurring.
- This needs urgent assessment and treatment.
- Take a picture of your palms now, so that you can refer back to it later.



Thank you for listening!

Any Questions?

Useful websites

- <https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>