

# Carpal Tunnel Release

## What is carpal tunnel release?

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is caused by pressure on the median nerve. The median nerve passes through the carpal tunnel in the wrist. The carpal tunnel is formed by bones of the wrist and a tough band of tissue called a ligament. When a person's CTS symptoms worsen, the surgeons may consider an operation to release the carpal tunnel.

A Carpal Tunnel Release involves releasing the ligament that forms the tunnel. The aim of this surgery is to allow more space for the nerve so that the symptoms reduce.

The area where the surgery occurs is usually tender for at least four to six weeks after the surgery. It may be several weeks or longer before you can return to your usual level of physical activity.

## What can you do to help recover from the surgery?

### Swelling

Try to keep your hand elevated (above the level of your heart) as much as possible if it is swollen.

### Wound Care

Keep the wound clean and dry. Your nurse will advise you when you can start getting your hand wet.

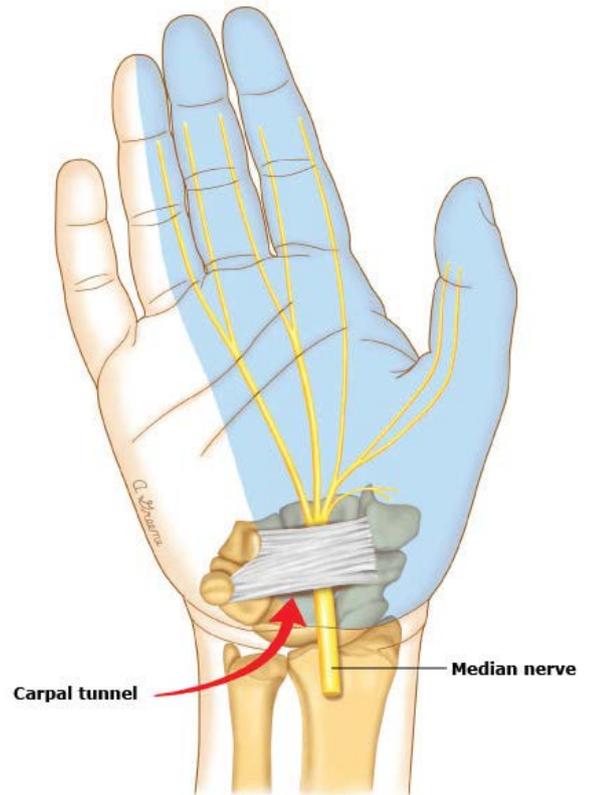
### Using your Hand

You are able to use your hand for light activities (e.g. dressing, writing, making a light meal). For the first 4 – 6 weeks you can use your hand/s as tolerated, however, it is advised to avoid:

- Powerful or prolonged gripping or pinching
- Vibratory machines/tools (including the lawn mower)
- Heavy lifting or repetitive tasks
- Before returning to driving you must get clearance from your doctor. It is advisable to check with your insurance company that you are covered in the event of an accident.

### Scar

After your stitches have come out and your wound is well healed, it may be helpful to massage the scar regularly with a basic moisturiser. Your therapist will advise if scar massage is appropriate for you, and will demonstrate the massage technique.



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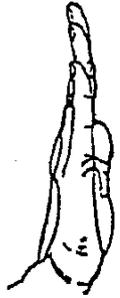
## Exercises

Gentle hand and wrist exercises are important to decrease swelling and stiffness. Your therapist will advise if the following exercises are appropriate after your operation.

### Tendon Gliding Exercises

Do each exercise \_\_\_\_\_ times, and holding for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.

Do these exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times each day.



STRAIGHT



HOOK



FULL FIST



TABLE TOP



STRAIGHT FIST

### Median Nerve Glide.

Do each exercise \_\_\_\_\_ times, and holding for \_\_\_\_\_ seconds.

Do these exercises \_\_\_\_\_ times each day.

1. Hold arm out to side with hand turned towards you and wrist back, like a waiter would do when holding a tray.



2. Straighten elbow and hand, as if you were still trying to keep the waiter's tray steady.



3. Alternate these positions.

### Caution

If you experience any increase in pain or return of pre-operative hand symptoms, please stop your exercises and contact your therapist immediately.

**Please contact your therapist if you have any queries or concerns.**

**Therapist:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone: (07) 3646 7100**