

Recovering from Carpal Tunnel Decompression Surgery

Information for patients

Introduction

It should now be approximately 14 days since your operation.

This leaflet is designed for you to keep and refer to as a guide for your longer term recovery from Carpal Tunnel Decompression Surgery.

At this stage in the recovery

You are less likely to be at risk of bleeding or infection and the symptoms of pins and needles and numbness may be starting to improve.

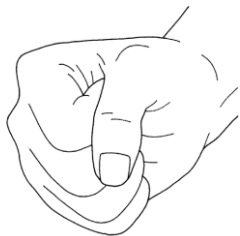
You may still potentially develop some stiffness or swelling of your wrist and feel some discomfort with your scar and surrounding areas (pillar pain) but this can be prevented/improved by following the advice in this leaflet.

To limit swelling/stiffness of your wrist

It is recommended that you **elevate your hand when resting** and use your hand for light activity only for 4-6 weeks after your surgery. This will keep the joints supple without putting excessive strain on the areas which are still healing.

We recommend that you follow the exercises below 3 times per day for at least the first 6 weeks. Repeat each exercise 10 times.

1. Make a fist and then straighten your fingers.



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2. Stand with your elbow bent and palm turned down.

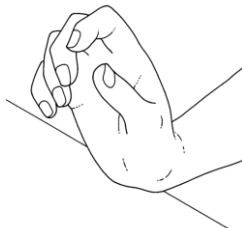
Turn your palm up and down, rotating your forearm.



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3. With your forearm supported on a table, relax your hand over the edge.

Extend the wrist and clench your fist - relax and let your hand drop.



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4. Stand or sit with your forearms horizontally in front of you and palms together as shown. Push your palms gently together. Hold for 10 seconds.



To prevent or improve discomfort of the scar and surrounding area

Scar Massage - Massage and moisturising are the most important factors in scar care. In Carpal Tunnel Decompression surgery you are at risk of developing “Pillar pain”- this is tenderness of the areas around your scar. Carrying out scar massage can help improve or prevent this condition.

- Using an un-perfumed moisturising cream such as E45 cream, massage the entire scar with firm pressure (this means enough pressure to turn the skin/scar white but not so hard it causes discomfort). Do this for 5-10 minutes, 2-3 times per day.
- Massage along the length of the scar and over the surrounding skin in small circles using your thumb or two fingers. Go clockwise and anti-clockwise.

It may take several months to achieve a supple and non-sensitive scar.

Returning to Work and other activities

Work/Hobbies: This really depends on the type of work and hobbies you do. If you are working in an office type job with no heavy lifting or strain on your hands, you may return within a few weeks as you feel able. If you are in a more manual job or wishing to do a heavy hobby (such as gym exercise) this will take longer, approximately 4-6 weeks. You can return to these as you feel able. It may be 3 months before your hand returns to full strength.

Driving: You should not drive after hand surgery until you are fit to do so. If your hand or wrist are painful or stiff you may not be able to drive safely. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are fit to drive in terms of the DVLA guidance, taking into consideration your hand surgery and any other medical condition that you may suffer from. There is detailed information on the Government website (link below) about fitness to drive and you should refer to that before driving.

www.gov.uk/health-conditions-and-driving