

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) is pressure on a nerve (median nerve) in your wrist. It causes tingling, numbness and pain in your hand and fingers.

You can often treat it yourself, but it can take months to get better.

Signs and symptoms

You may experience these symptoms into your wrist, hand and fingers:

- An ache or pain
- Numbness
- Tingling or pins and needles
- Weakness
- Decreased dexterity

These symptoms often start slowly, come and go and usually worsen at night

If your hand becomes weak or you struggle to maintain a firm grip of objects, please contact your GP or Physiotherapist for further advice.

You are more at risk of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome if you:

- Are overweight
- Are pregnant
- Have other conditions e.g. diabetes or arthritis
- Previously injured your wrist
- Have a job or hobby which repeatedly bend, grip hard or using vibrating tools

You can find out more about Carpal Tunnel Syndrome from the NHS website.

Visit NHS website [nhs.uk/conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome)

Treatment

Symptoms can improve in a few months but treatment and a full recovery can take time.

Wearing a wrist splint can prevent symptoms at night and when they're brought on by particular activities as this keeps the wrist straight and relieves the pressure on the nerve.

Activity modification

Symptoms often settle naturally with a change in activity.

It's important to modify any activities that may be causing your symptoms, particularly those involving repetitive movements, prolonged bending of your wrist or gripping hard.

You could also consider:

- Reducing the duration, frequency and/or force required to complete tasks
- Taking regular breaks during heavy or repetitive tasks
- Other ways that the task can be completed
- Alternate heavier tasks with lighter tasks
- Reviewing your computer station set up; paying attention to the position of your keyboard and mouse within a distance the length of your forearm from your body

Exercises

The following exercises may help by gently gliding the nerve through the carpal tunnel.

They may initially bring on mild symptoms, but this should ease quickly. If you feel your pain is getting worse, take the time to seek advice from your GP or Physiotherapist.



Median nerve flossing

Stand with your arm out to the side and your palm facing forwards with your fingers straight. Bend your affected hand and fingers bend toward you.

Then move your hand and fingers in the opposite direction, extending your wrist backward.

Alternate between these movements.

Add in head movement with your head bent in the same direction as your wrist to progress this exercise

Reps: 10 to 20

Frequency: 2 to 3 times daily or as needed.



Gliding: Hook

Start with your fingers held out straight. Gently bend the middle joints of your fingers down toward your upper palm and hold for 5 seconds

Reps: 10-15

Frequency: Twice daily



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