

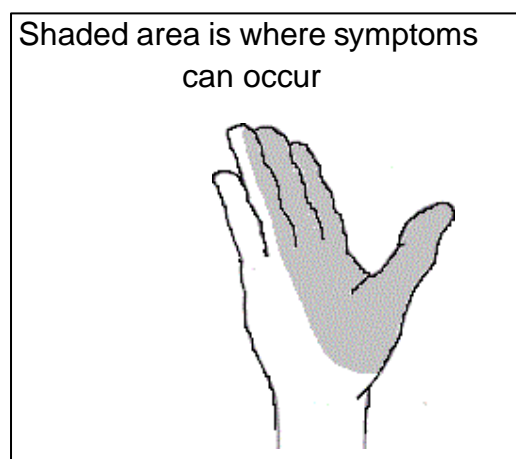
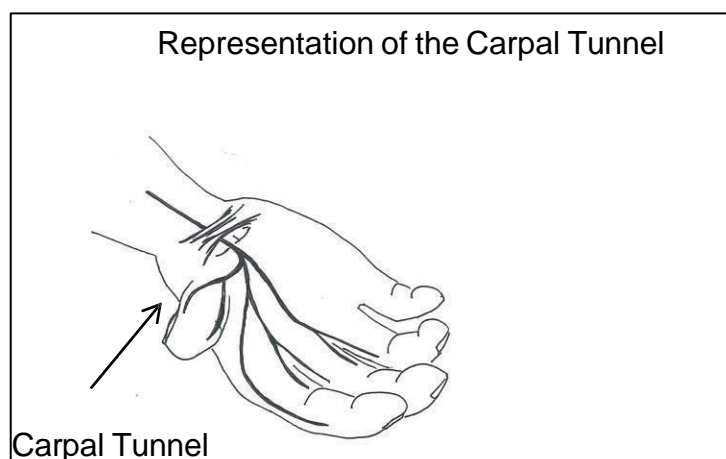
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

This leaflet provides information about carpal tunnel syndrome. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to the staff member in charge of your care.

What is carpal tunnel syndrome?

The carpal tunnel is a narrow passage in your wrist made up of small bones which lie below a tough band of tissue above. One of the nerves (the median nerve) that controls the feeling and movement in the hand runs through the carpal tunnel.

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) occurs when the nerve is compressed within the carpal tunnel.



What are the signs and symptoms?

CTS is a common condition that can cause pain, numbness and a tingling sensation in the hand, first (index), middle and ring finger. Sometimes the thumb can also feel weak. Symptoms usually develop gradually, starting at night.

Do I need any tests to confirm the diagnosis?

Sometimes a nerve conduction test is completed to find out the severity of the condition.

What treatments are available?

In some cases, the symptoms of CTS will resolve without treatment. Non-surgical treatments such as wrist splints or corticosteroid injections can be used to treat mild or moderate symptoms.

In more severe cases of CTS surgery may be required to reduce the pressure on the median nerve.

Changing how you use your hands and complete activities.

Certain activities can increase the severity of your symptoms. Ways to reduce the impact of day-to-day activities can include:

- **Reducing the duration, frequency and/or force required to complete a task.**
For example:
 - Take regular breaks during heavier or repetitive tasks that increase your symptoms.
 - Consider other ways that a task can be completed. For example, try to push heavy objects across a table / bench rather than carrying it.
 - Alternate heavier tasks with lighter tasks
- **Avoid positioning your wrist in extremes of movement** (i.e., forwards and backwards).
 - There is less room in the carpal tunnel when your wrist is bent, which increases the amount of pressure created within the carpal tunnel.
- **Avoid prolonged or repetitive pinching or gripping.** For example:
 - Loosen your grip and change your position regularly when reading a book, talking on the phone, pushing a shopping trolley or sweeping / mopping.
- **Modifying your environment.** For example:
 - Use equipment / tools / cutlery with thicker handles as this requires less force to hold.
 - Review your computer station set up. Your therapist can discuss this with you further.
 - Consider using soft gloves / hand mitt or softer conforming handles, to reduce vibration during activities such as using a lawnmower or riding a bicycle.

Splinting

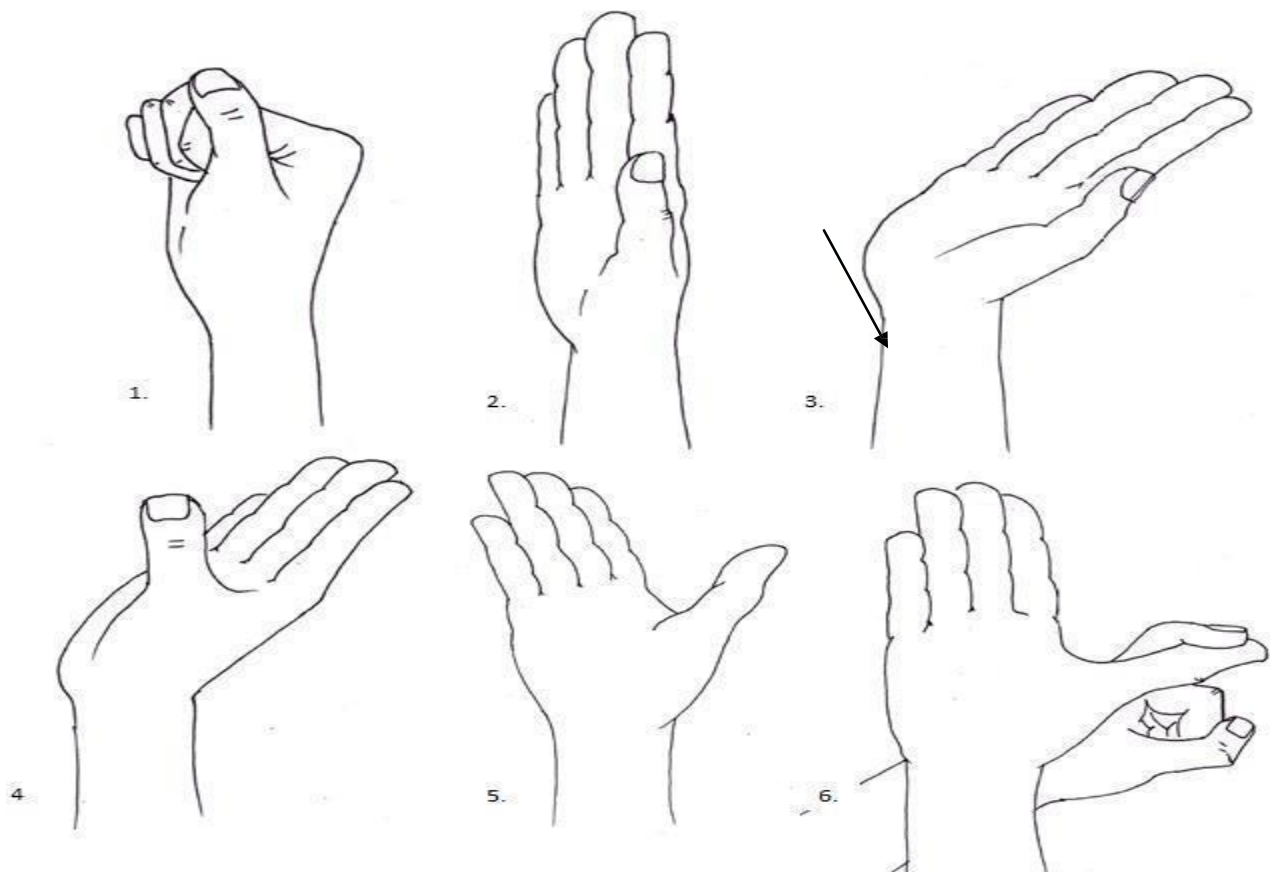
Your therapist may provide you with a splint. The purpose of this splint is to prevent you from bending or straightening your wrist as this makes the carpal tunnel smaller which can bring on symptoms. The splint should be worn as follows:

- ☐ Day time
 - Wear as long as needed to help manage your symptoms.
 - Do not wear while driving.
- ☐ Night time
 - Wear your braces overnight if your symptoms are worse whilst sleeping.

Please note that after you start using the splints, it may take several weeks before you start to notice an improvement in your symptoms.

Exercises

It is important you do these exercises as prescribed by your therapist. They can help your symptoms by moving first the nerve within the tunnel and then the tendons within the tunnel. This can help reduce fluid, scarring and improve fluid return within the nerve.



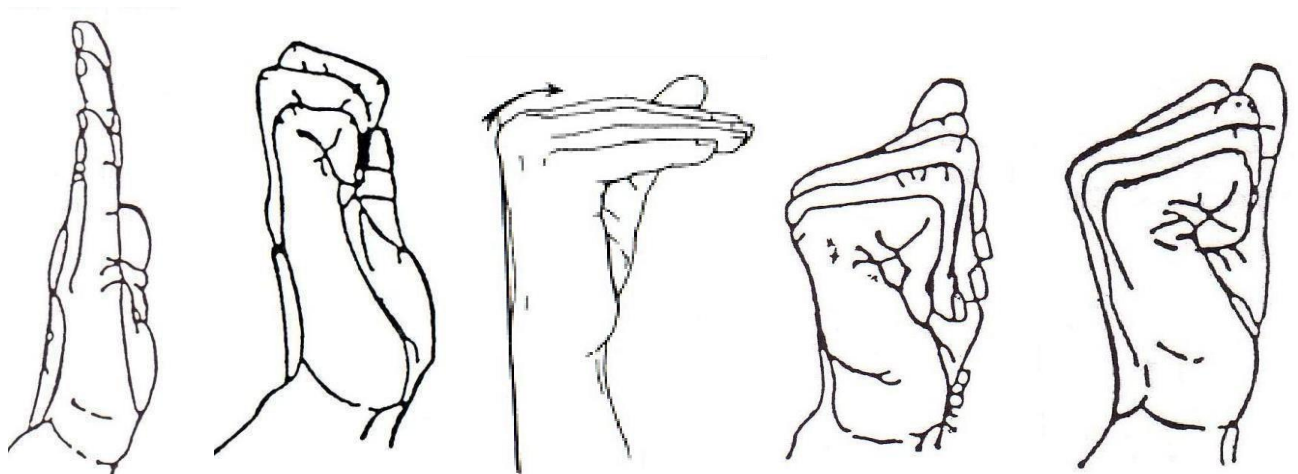
1. Start with your hand in a fist, wrist neutral / straight
2. Then straighten your fingers keeping your thumb at the side of your hand
3. Move your wrist backwards
4. Now extend your thumb away from your hand
5. Turn your hand so the front of the wrist faces you
6. If this hasn't caused any tingling, then stretch your thumb downwards.

Go through the above sequence _____times_____times during the day.

Stop doing the exercises if they make your symptoms worse and / or your symptoms do not settle.

Additional exercises

(Please do these ONLY if prescribed by your therapist)



Straight

Hook

Table

Flat Fist

Full Fist

Go through the above sequence _____times _____times during the day.

Discontinue the exercises if they provoke your symptoms and / or your symptoms do not settle.

Other Instructions and Advice

Useful sources of information

Versus Arthritis www.versusarthritis.org/

British Society for Surgery of the Hand www.bssh.ac.uk

NHS UK www.nhs.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding the information provided in this leaflet, please feel free to discuss them with your therapist at your next appointment.

For more urgent queries the team can be contacted on the **treatment enquiries** 'phone number listed below.

Your therapist's name is: _____

Treatment enquiries: 020 8725 1038 (answering machine only)

Appointments: 020 8725 0007

Or scan
here



For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk

Was this information helpful? Yes / No

Please let us know, contact patient.information@stgeorges.nhs.uk and include the leaflet title.

Thank you.

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or care. You can contact the PALS team on the advisory telephone line Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 2pm to 5pm.

A Walk-in service is available:

Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 10am and 4pm

Friday between 10am and 2pm.

The Walk-in and Advisory telephone services are closed on Wednesdays.

Please contact PALS in advance to check if there are any changes to opening times.

PALS is based within the hospital in the ground floor main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings.

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS UK

The NHS provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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