Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

Version number: **3**
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Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

Patient Information

Therapy Department

- Author ID: TG
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- Version: 3
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Introduction

This leaflet is to provide advice and exercises following your carpal tunnel release surgery.

What should I do for the best results?

- Use your hand for light activities as soon as it is comfortable to do so

- Avoid putting excessive weight through your hand and wrist, and avoid repetitive gripping and heavy lifting for 6 weeks after the surgery

- Do not drive until your stitches have been removed and the wound has healed. Then you have to make sure you have enough strength and control to drive safely.

- Once your stitches have been removed and the wound has healed, you can consider returning to work. This will depend on the type of work you do.

Scar Care

Once your wound has healed and is dry, it is important to begin scar massage.

To do this, you should use an unscented moisturising cream. Apply gentle pressure to the length of the scar 3 to 4 times a day for a few minutes each time. This will help the scar to heal, flatten and will reduce tenderness.

Some people experience increased sensitivity of the scar, which can feel uncomfortable. To reduce the sensitivity to the area, continue with scar massage and gently touch the area using different textures using different pressures.

Expectations

Some people notice an immediate improvement in the numbness, tingling or pain in the fingers. However, it can take up to 3 months for the full benefits to be felt, especially if the nerve has been compressed for some time.

You may also notice that your grip is weaker. In many cases, it can take up to 6 months for the strength in your hand to completely return. In more severe cases, full grip strength may not return due to the extent of nerve compression.

If you experience any of the following in the weeks after your surgery, please contact the Therapy Department:

- Persistent pain, swelling or scar sensitivity
- Significant stiffness in the wrist and / or fingers
- Inability to fully straighten the fingers
- Inability to use the hand for daily tasks
- Significant weakness, unable to grip

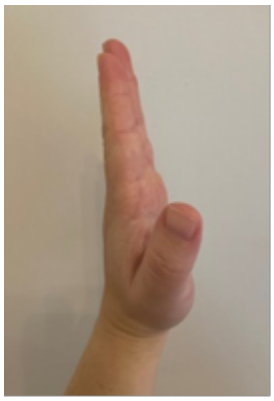
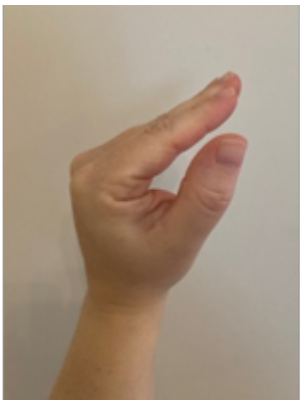
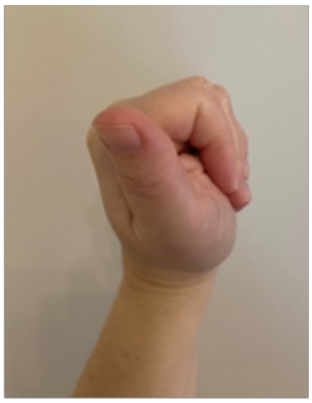
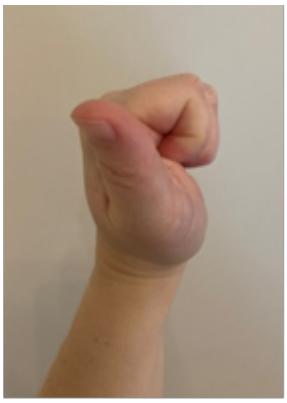
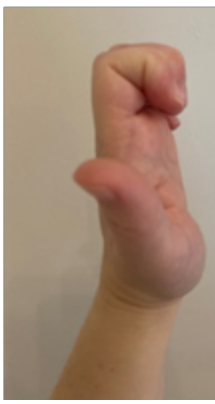
Exercises

None of the exercises should be painful. However, it is normal to experience some discomfort. Try to practise the exercises little and often throughout the day.

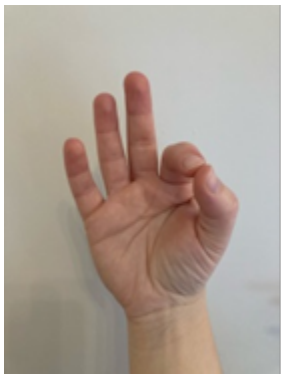
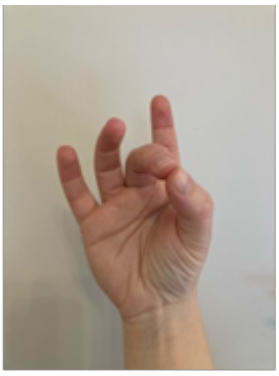
If you feel you have done too many, rest the hand until it feels comfortable, and slowly build up the exercises again.

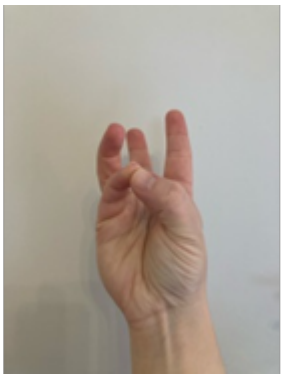
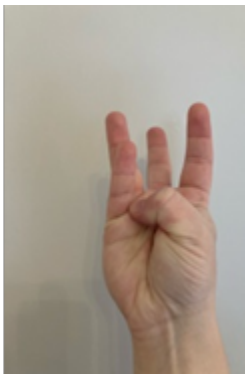
Tendon Gliding

The finger and thumb tendons pass through the carpal tunnel, so it is important to ensure they continue to glide freely to prevent stiffness.

Thumb Exercises

Wrist Exercises

Gently move your wrist from side to side, and up and down as shown below.



Contact details

Wigan Infirmary Hand Therapy Department

Fracture clinic

0300 707 2595

08:00-17:00 Monday to Friday

Wrightington Therapy Department

0300 707 8272

wwl-tr.therapyadmin@nhs.net

08:00-16:30 Monday to Friday

Leigh Health Centre Therapy Department

0300 707 1597

wwl-tr.leighphysio@nhs.net

08:00-16:30 Monday to Friday

Boston House

0300 707 1113

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08:00-16:30 Monday to Friday



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