

Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

Patient Information

Therapy Department

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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 excessive weight-bearing through the hand and wrist and avoid repetitive gripping and heavy lifting for 6 weeks after the surgery.
- You should not drive until the stitches have been removed and the wound has healed. Then you have to be certain you have sufficient strength and control to do so safely.
- Once the stitches have been removed and the wound has healed, you can consider returning to work. This will be dependent on the type of job you do.

Scar Care

When your wound has healed and is dry, it is important to start massage.

To do this, you should use unscented moisturising cream. Apply a 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 any tenderness.

Some people experience increased sensitivity of the scar, which can be unpleasant. To desensitise the area, you should continue with scar massage and practise touching the area with 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 are likely to notice that your grip is weaker. In many cases, it can take up to six months for the strength in your hand to completely return. In 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 straighten the fingers out fully
- 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. You should aim 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.



Should you have any queries or concerns, please telephone the Therapy Department on telephone: 01257 488272 during Reception hours, Monday to Friday 8am until 4.30pm.

Comments, Compliments or Complaints

The Patient Relations/Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Department provides confidential on the spot advice, information and support to patients, relatives, friends and carers.

Contact Us

Tel: 01942 822376 (Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm)

The Patient Relations/PALS Manager
Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
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Ask 3 Questions

Become more involved in decisions about your healthcare. You may be asked to make choices about your treatment. To begin with, try to make sure you get the answers to three key questions:

1. What are my options?
2. What are the pros and cons of each option for me?
3. How do I get support to help me make a decision that is right for me?



https://www.wrightingtonhospital.org.uk/media/downloads/sdm_information_leaflet.pdf

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For details on how we collect, use and store the information we hold about you, please take a look at our “how we use your information” leaflet which can be found on the Trust website:
<https://www.wvl.nhs.uk>

This leaflet is also available in audio, large print, Braille and other languages upon request. For more information please ask in the department/ward.

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