



TIP OF THE MONTH

What is carpal tunnel, and why does it hurt so much?

The carpal tunnel is a small space at the wrist through which the median nerve and nine tendons pass through. The median nerve travels on top of the tendons through the tunnel. The tunnel itself is made up of your wrist bones and along the top of the tunnel is a thick fibrous ligament called the transverse carpal ligament. If the tendons become swollen (tenosynovitis), or if the tunnel size decreases because of injury, compression to the median nerve can occur. Symptoms may include pain during pinching and gripping, a feeling of clumsiness – the inability to hold things, numbness in the fingers at night, or a radiating pain up the arm.

Risk factors at home and work

Many factors can contribute to pain in the carpal tunnel, but these are some of the most [common causes](#).

- **Repetition** – Overuse can occur with light forces. Irritation of the tendon can be caused by rapid, repetitive activity without a break. Decreased blood flow to the nerves and tendons may be caused by holding or gripping an object without relaxation.
- **Force** – The muscles of the hand and fingers contract while gripping or pinching. These contractions place stress on the tendons that go through the carpal tunnel. Higher forces are more likely to expose you to greater risks.
- **Bending** – The tendons in the carpal tunnel can be irritated by bending your hand. Bending your hand up, down, or sideways may inflame the tendons in the carpal tunnel.
- **Vibration** – Nerves are especially susceptible to vibration. Common causes of vibration of the nerves in the carpal tunnel are power tools, steering wheels, or other mechanized equipment.
- **Impact** – Your hand is not a tool. Hitting, moving, or jerking objects may damage wrist structures. Even using a hammer transmits sudden force to these delicate structures.

Practicing prevention

The first line of defense against Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is reducing the risk factors that may lead to CTS. Look carefully at your equipment and tools and try to eliminate the forces that are risk factors. These can include bending, vibration, impact, and repetition.

- **Tool Handles** – A handle should have an optimum grip span of about 2¼ inches.
- **Gripping Surface** – Use rubberized coating or tubing on your gripping surface. This lowers the grip strength required to hold onto the tool.
- **Vibration Reduction** – Place a rubber or gel material on the handles or utilize gloves with rubber inserts to reduce vibration.

Home treatment

- **Ice** – After doing wrist stretches, use an ice pack on the palm and wrist area for 10 minutes after intensive hand activities.
- **Rest** – Rest your hands after frequent, forceful, or repetitive activities that last 30 – 60 minutes. Try doing a different activity that is not as stressful to your wrist and hand.

If you're experiencing carpal tunnel pain - let us know. From the beginning of pain to experiencing chronic symptoms, we can provide stretches, relieve pain, and test if conservative treatment will help before exploring the options for surgery.

Call today to ask us how we can help you get back to enjoying the activities that are important to you!



“I don't focus on what I'm up against. I focus on my goals and I try to ignore the rest.”

— Venus Williams

TELL A FRIEND

The greatest compliment we can receive is for our patients to tell their friends and family about their positive experience with us. If you know someone who is experiencing pain or limitations and you believe they could benefit from therapy, please tell them about us.

We will ensure that they will receive great care and have a positive therapy experience with us!

A RECIPE FOR YOU

Vanilla Protein Shake

If you are looking for a healthy meal replacement, this is it! This vanilla protein shake was given to us by a colleague, who we have on good authority, drinks these regularly.



INGREDIENTS:

- 1-1/2 cups unsweetened Vanilla Almond Milk
- 1 scoop Vanilla Protein Powder
- 1 tbsp. flaxseed oil or ground flaxseed meal
- ¼ tbsp. of cinnamon
- 1-2 packets of Stevia to sweeten (optional)

DIRECTIONS:

1. Put everything into a blender and process until smooth. Enjoy!



DO'S AND DON'TS FOR SPRING CLEANING



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