

Patient information

Carpal Tunnel Release (CTR) Post Operative Advice

Therapies

After your carpal tunnel release (CTR) it is very important that you use your hand as soon as possible for light activities such as using your phone, cutlery, typing, doing hair etc. after surgery (within one to two days). However, we do advise that you avoid any heavy lifting until about six weeks after your surgery.

It is quite normal to experience shooting/electric shock type pain whilst the nerve is “settling” after surgery. This will be discussed further at your one-to-two-week clinic appointment if ongoing.

The following exercises should be performed hourly after your surgery (until your hand feels normal) to help to settle any swelling and regain your function:

1. Make a fist and hold for five seconds then straighten your fingers (Figure 1).



Figure 1.

2. Assisted finger flexion:

If you are unable to make a full fist, grasp affected hand as shown (Figure 2) placing the thumb of your unaffected hand along the tips of the fingers and squeeze affected hand into a tighter fist position.

Hold for a gentle stretch, relax and repeat.

Figure 2.



3. With your thumb, stroke each finger from its tip to its base (Figure 3).

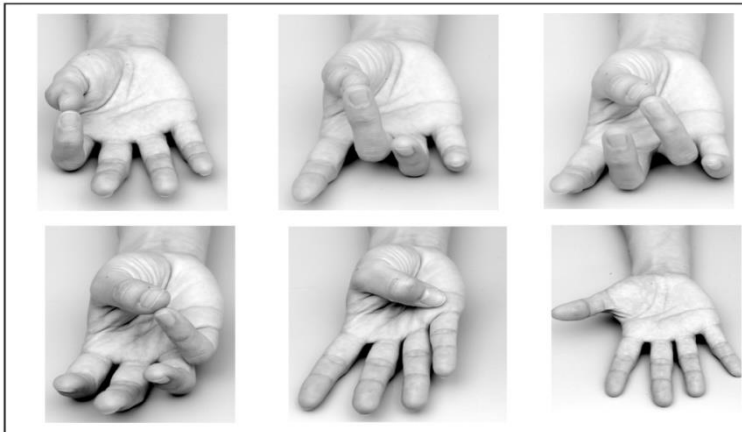


Figure 3.

Assist with other hand if stiff

4. Support your forearm on a table or armrest. Bend your fingers into a relaxed fist, move the hand up then down (Figure 4).



Figure 4.

Wound care:

If you are happy to do so you can remove your bulky bandages after two to three days, but keep a dressing on the wound to make sure it is kept clean and dry for ten to fourteen days. Once the wound is healed you can progress the tasks within your pain /comfort limits.

Avoid direct pressure over the wound until fully healed.

Driving:

You can return to driving when you feel safe to do so. You will need to be happy that you can grip the steering wheel, tolerate pressure and friction over the wound and be able to respond to hazards. This is normally at about five to fourteen days after your CTR.

Work:

When you return to work after your surgery will depend on the type of work you do, you are the best person to decide when you will be able to do your job.

Suggested return to work times below, but you may return sooner:

- Office work - 0 to two weeks
- Light manual work - two to six weeks
- Heavy manual work - six to eight weeks

Scar Care:

A week or two after sutures have been removed/dissolved you can start scar massage. Start gently and then gradually increase pressure. This will be discussed in your 1–2-week clinic appointment.

1. Using two fingers make small circles over the length of the scar and to the skin around the scar.
2. Pinch a small amount of the scar tissue between your thumb and first two fingers. Roll the scar between your fingers and thumb. Do this along the length of the scar.

Scar massage will also help to treat pillar pain if you get it. Pillar pain sometimes occurs about two to six weeks following CTR. It is pain at the base of the hand on the palmar side. Stretches may also help. These will be discussed with you if needed.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future.

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

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<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome/>

https://www.bssh.ac.uk/patients/conditions/21/carpal_tunnel_syndrome

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/conditions/carpal-tunnel-syndrome/>

<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/rehabilitation-exercises/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>

All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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