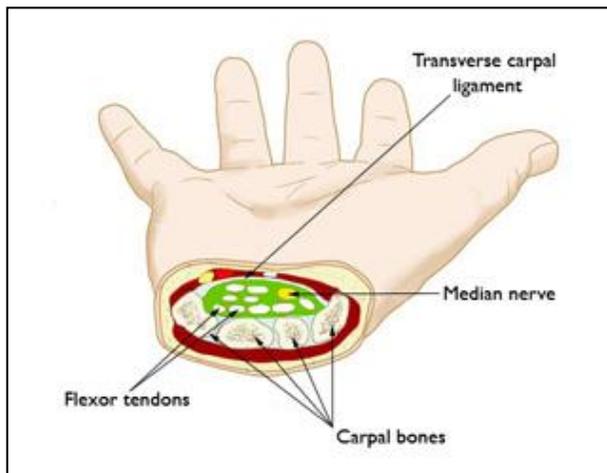


Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

The carpal tunnel is narrow in the wrist. It is formed by the bones of the wrist on the bottom and a strong band of connective tissue on top (palm side).

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a nerve compression event of the median nerve.



The median nerve travels from the forearm into the hand through this tunnel. The median nerve provides feeling in the palm side of the thumb, index finger, and long fingers and provides motor control to the muscles around the base of the thumb.

This tunnel space can become crowded resulting in compression. This occurs due to increase of pressure in the tunnel space.

Causes: increase of pressure in the tunnel can be of anatomic nature; disease related involving an inflammatory event in wrists, hands, ankles and feet; and can be related to activity level, sudden weight gain, or sudden injury to the wrist. The cause is not always clear.

Symptoms may include an onset of numbness or tingling at night; pain in the wrist or hand; a sense of weakness may occur. If left untreated and allowed to progress, the nerve compression will become more severe resulting in permanent damage that you will experience as sensory loss

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome may be easily misdiagnosed due to similar symptoms with other musculo-skeletal disorders. It is best to consult with a professional to help you determine the best course of action.

Early Intervention: You can take some action immediately to help yourself. At night, you may be bending your wrists and fisting. Before you go to bed, massage your palms together briskly for 30 seconds, then open them quickly straightening all of your digits 10 times. After you have completed those first two actions, turn your hands over, palms facing up and stretch your thumb back for 2 to 3 seconds. Do this 3 times on each hand. **When you go to bed,** sleep with your hands open and wrists straight. You can use a wrist support if it helps. Some people have found an oven mitt to work well to hold hands open and create warmth.

This early intervention suggestion will cause no harm and if it provides relief, it will be helpful information for your therapist in guiding your treatment or for your physician in determining if you need more specific testing.

Your hands are critical for function; we want to help you care for them and do what you love to do!