

Painful wrist condition affects general public

Injuries to the wrist are not as common as those affecting the knee, ankle and shoulder. But wrist problems can be just as disabling as we use our wrist and hands with virtually everything we do. Wrist sprains are common in activities such as gymnastics, tennis, weight lifting and basketball.

Fractures of the wrist bone can be equally problem-causing as the bones of the wrist joint have a poor blood supply and require extensive healing before returning to pre-injury levels of activity.

A relatively common disorder affecting the wrist is called Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. The bones of the wrist joint, of which there are eight, are called the carpal bones. The Carpal Tunnel is an area on the palm side of the wrist where a nerve leaves the forearm and wrist area and enters the hand. It passes through a tunnel composed of bone and strong connective tissue. Damage to the wrist in the form of a fracture, inflammation of the tendon sheath or increased pressure inside the tunnel can put pressure on this very important nerve.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome affects women more than males and usually those in their thirties or forties. Symptoms include pins and needles or a burning type of pain, usually located in the thumb, ring and middle fingers. Pain that wakes the person up at night is usually a major symptom of this syndrome.

Pain is increased when using the wrist to write, dress and type or even turn pages in a book. The hand and fingers may also feel clumsy, as the nerve is not sending proper signals into the hand.

Treatment of Carpal Tunnel is aimed at the causes. Inflammation can be controlled with rest, ice, splinting the wrist and anti-inflammatory. Wearing a splint while sleeping keeps the wrist in a neutral position, easing strain on the nerve. Only persistent cases will need surgery to relieve the pressure inside the tunnel.

People who use their wrist often during work or exercise are susceptible to carpal tunnel syndrome. Weight lifters, bike riders, gymnasts, people who work in ice cream shops, secretaries who do a large amount of typing and assembly line workers are all capable of acquiring this often painful disorder.

Terry Robinson PT, ATC

Grapevine Physical Therapy

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