



Figure out what might be causing your wrist to swell, and change this. Avoid repetitive movements and things like vibrating hand tools.



Wearing a wrist splint during the day and at night can be very helpful. Take it off occasionally to exercise your wrist and hand.



Take medication as directed by your doctor.



If pain does not improve, other treatments like wrist surgery or the injection of medicine may be recommended.

#### FROM THE DESK OF

#### NOTES

### How Is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Treated ?

Treatment involves two steps. The first is a lifestyle change: stop doing whatever caused CTS. This change may be hard if it involves a job, but talk to your employer. Sometimes simple changes, such as using a wrist pad while typing so your wrist is in a better position, help. A physical therapist or occupational therapist can suggest ways to do things differently.

The second step is to take pressure off the median nerve. Medicine, wrist splints, and surgery are usually used. A wrist splint at night is best, but some people wear a splint during the day. Pills give relief for a short time by decreasing inflammation. Medicine can also be injected into the wrist and can help for a longer period.

Surgery to make more room for the nerve is the best way to reduce pressure on the nerve when other treatments are ineffective. With surgery, you usually get better quickly, but you should rest your wrist for at least 6 weeks to avoid new symptoms.

### DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

- ✓ **DO** change what caused CTS.
- ✓ **DO** take pills as directed by your doctor.
- ✓ **DO** briefly take off a wrist splint, if you wear it during the day, to exercise your wrist and hand.
- ⊘ **DON'T** hit things with the butt of your palm. This may injure your median nerve.
- ⊘ **DON'T** delay getting treatment. If muscle wasting occurs, chances of full recovery are less.
- ⊘ **DON'T** use vibrating hand tools.
- ⊘ **DON'T** hold your hand or wrist in awkward positions.
- ⊘ **DON'T** use repetitive movements of the hand or wrist, especially forceful grasping or pinching.
- ⊘ **DON'T** use direct pressure over the palm and wrist.
- ⊘ **DON'T** completely stop using and exercising your hand.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

#### Contact the following sources:

- American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons  
Tel: (800) 346-AAOS  
Web: [www.aaos.org](http://www.aaos.org)
- Arthritis Foundation  
Tel: (800) 283-7800  
Web: [www.arthritis.org](http://www.arthritis.org)