



POSTOPERATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Carpal / Cubital Tunnel Release

Our goal is to ensure your safety, help you have the best possible outcome and help you feel comfortable during your recovery. Please follow these instructions on how to take care of yourself following your procedure.

GENERAL:

- It is important to keep the area elevated higher than your heart as much as possible for the first three days in order to reduce swelling. You may use pillows to support the area if needed.
- Please no strenuous activities and allow your hand to rest. After 2 days, you may use your hand for light activities (preparing meals etc). Please begin to open and close fingers and move your wrist as often as possible.
- You will experience mild swelling and bruising. You may also feel numbness and some tingling, which should improve every day after your surgery.
- You can expect a slow, progressive improvement in symptoms and grip strength. Depending on your age, severity of initial problem and associated conditions, this may take as long as two years.

PAIN:

It is normal to have pain and discomfort following your procedure. Please take pain medication as directed:

Tylenol
 Ibuprofen

Prescription Medication: _____
 Prescription Medication: _____

If you have worsening pain not controlled by your medication, please contact our office for instructions.

THE DRESSING:

- Please keep your initial dressing intact for **2 (two) days**.
- After 2 days:
 - Remove all outer wraps and gauze. Please DO NOT replace them.
 - Wash the wound with soap and water. You may shower and then pat incision dry.
- Please check your circulation: Press on your fingernails - they should turn white then return to pink when the pressure is released.
- If your fingernail(s) is (are) blue or white, unwrap and rewrap the bandages so they are more comfortable. If this does not improve circulation, contact our office, your GP, or your local Emergency Department.

Your sutures will: Dissolve on their own.
 Need to be removed in _____ days.

EXERCISES:

- You will find a set of hand exercise at the end of this document. It is important that you exercise your hand to increase strength and mobility.
- Please start these exercises 2 days after your surgery. You may use your hand lightly, but nothing very strenuous.
- These movements will help prevent scar tissue from sticking around the nerve and tendons.
- Please do these 3 times daily, 5- 10 times each movement (enlarged image can be found on final page of this document).

ACTIVITIES:

- **3 days to 2 weeks after your surgery:**
 - Ensure you are doing your hand exercises as outlined above.
 - Reintroduce activities as your pain and swelling allow.
 - Please no heavy lifting (15 pounds) for 4 to 6 weeks.
 - **Driving:** You must be pain free and off all pain medication. You may wish to have another licensed driver with you for your first short trip.
- **2 - 6 weeks after your surgery:**
 - Please no heavy lifting (15 pounds) for 4 to 6 weeks.
 - **Return to work:** You will likely be ready to return to work within 1-6 weeks depending on your occupation and type of physical exertion required. If you require a medical note for your employer, please contact your Patient Care Coordinator and they will be happy to help you
- Please refrain from smoking. Smoking may increase the chance of complications.
- Please do not swim in lakes, pools or use hot tubs for at least 2 weeks following surgery.
- It generally takes up to 6-8 weeks to feel normal again and resume regular activities. Please ask your surgeon if you have any questions about activity level during the healing process.

If you have any of the following, call our office (during business hours), your family doctor or present to the Emergency Department:

Signs Of Infection:

- Pus-like drainage from the incision, grey or green.
- Redness that spreads beyond the incision.
- New pain, getting worse after 3 or 4 days.
- Fever, chills, sweats, aches and pains (flu-like symptoms).

Questions not addressed by this handout

Special Instructions: _____

FOR AFTER-HOURS EMERGENCIES:

- Call the Queensway Carleton Hospital at 613-721-2000 and the Plastic Surgeon on-call will be paged.

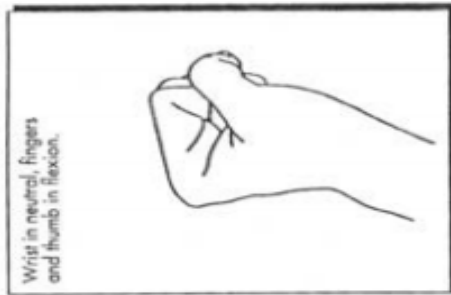
FOLLOW UP APPOINTMENT:

- Your Patient Care Coordinator will call you to confirm your appointment. Please call us at 613-232-7777 if you have any questions or concerns.

YOUR APPOINTMENT HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR: _____

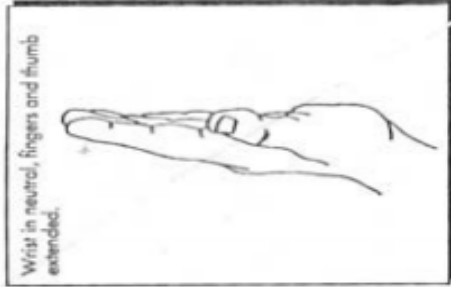
Please do each exercise 3 times daily, 5- 10 times each movement.

Starting position 1



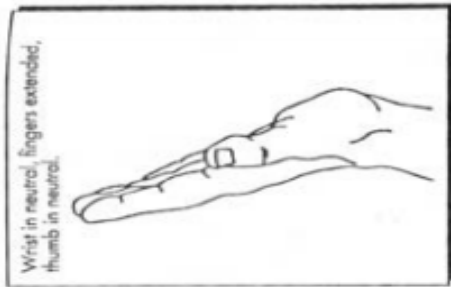
Wrist in neutral, fingers and thumb in flexion.

Position 2



Wrist in neutral, fingers and thumb extended.

Position 3



Wrist in neutral, fingers extended, thumb in neutral.

TENDON GLIDING EXERCISES



Straight



Hook



Duck

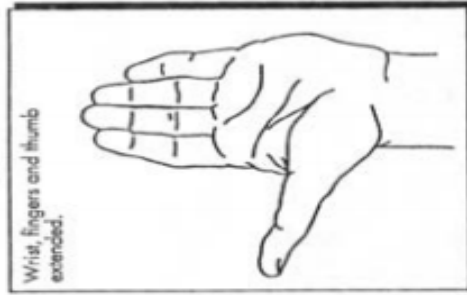


Straight Fist



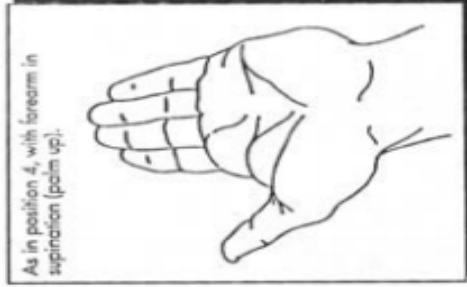
Full Fist

Position 4



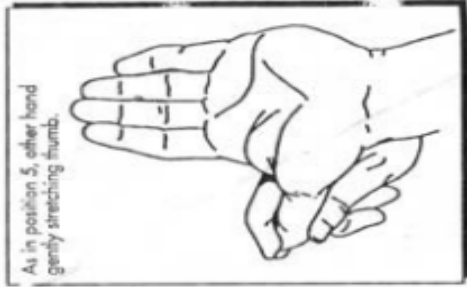
Wrist, fingers and thumb extended.

Position 5



As in position 4, with forearm in supination (palm up).

Position 6



As in position 5, other hand gently stretching thumb.



Hanging Limp Wrist



Wrist Extension