

OS05lite Carpal Tunnel Release

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This document will give you information about carpal tunnel release. If you have any questions, you should ask your GP or other relevant health professional.

What is carpal tunnel syndrome?

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a condition where there is increased pressure on a nerve that crosses the front of your wrist (the median nerve). The median nerve runs through a tight tunnel, together with the tendons that bend your fingers.

What are the benefits of surgery?

You should get relief from pain and numbness in your hand.

Are there any alternatives to surgery?

If your symptoms are mild, a wrist support worn at night often helps.

A steroid injection near the carpal tunnel can reduce the numbness or pain in most people.

What does the operation involve?

The operation can usually be performed under a local anaesthetic and usually takes about 20 minutes.

Your surgeon will make a small cut on the palm of your hand. They will cut the tight ligament (called the flexor retinaculum) that forms the roof of the carpal tunnel (see figure 1). This stops the nerve being compressed.

What complications can happen?

1 General complications

- Pain
- Bleeding
- Infection of the surgical site (wound)
- Scarring

2 Specific complications

- Numbness in your thumb, index and middle fingers
- Tenderness of the scar
- Aching in your wrist
- Return of numbness and pain
- Severe pain, stiffness and loss of use of your hand (complex regional pain syndrome)

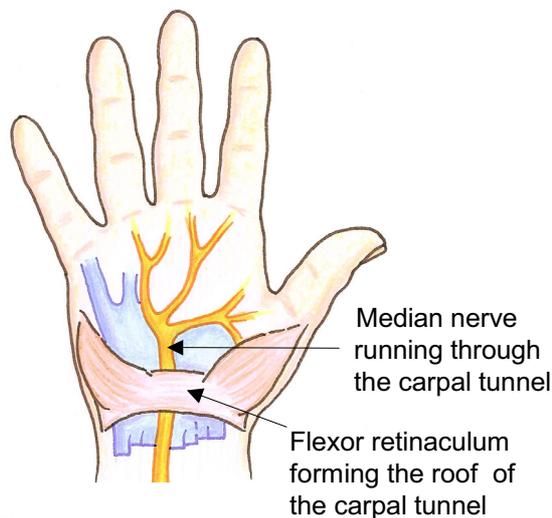


Figure 1

Median nerve running under the flexor retinaculum

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day. Keep your hand raised and bandaged for two days. It is important to gently exercise your fingers, elbow and shoulder to prevent stiffness. Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Your symptoms may continue to improve for up to six months.

Summary

Carpal tunnel syndrome causes numbness in your thumb, index and middle fingers. A carpal tunnel release should improve your symptoms and prevent permanent nerve damage.

Acknowledgements

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