

What to look for

- a tingling or numb feeling in the hand or fingers
- shooting pains in the wrist, forearm, and sometimes extending to the shoulder, neck, and chest, or foot.
- difficulty clenching the fist or grasping small objects.
- dry skin and fingernail deterioration.

Occurs when a worker spends long periods at a keyboard. It produces symptoms of pain in the affected joints which is difficult to relieve and is aggravated by movement of the joint.

Many people think this disorder came about with the onset of the computer keyboard. In fact, it has been around a long time but with the amount of keyboard users now, the problem has become more widespread.

CTS and other forms of RSI are most common in middle age and tend to affect women more than men, especially if the women are overweight, pregnant, or menopausal. The injuries are easily prevented and entirely correctable if recognised early. It is vitally important for injuries involving repetitive stress that the patient stops or changes the activity that brings on the problem. Failure to do so can result in permanent, irreversible damage to the nerves and muscles in the hand, wrist, or other parts of the body.

Causes

Repetitive stress injuries can happen to anyone whose work calls for long periods of steady hand movement, from musicians to meat cutters.

As well as work related causes, a number of sports can bring on repetitive stress injuries. Some authorities believe that a pyridoxine (vitamin B6) deficiency can also induce the symptoms.

Traditional Treatments

Your doctor will perform a range of tests to determine the extent of the injuries. Recommendations usually include rest, cold compresses, and refraining from using the affected area.

To relieve long-term pain, the doctor may prescribe aspirin or another non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug.

Alternative/Natural Treatments

Non-conventional treatments for carpal tunnel syndrome complement the need to reduce inflammation, rest the damaged wrist, and take the necessary steps to correct the habits or activities that caused the problem in the first place.

Exercises that strengthen the hand and wrist can be useful in preventing further stress injuries. Warm up exercises before tackling your work will help.

Dietary Considerations

Vitamin E is reported to help reduce tissue inflammation. Vitamin C supplements be beneficial in tissue restoration. Vitamin B6, or pyridoxine, is reported to help nerve inflammation and enhance blood circulation, and serves as a mild diuretic or try a vitamin B complex supplement; symptoms should ease within the month.

Avoid refined sugars.

When to seek further professional advice

- You feel pain in your wrist, hand, or fingers after a fall or other accident; you may have a broken bone.
- You have any of the symptoms above.