

Occupational Hand Therapy

Post-Operative Instructions: Carpal Tunnel Decompression

You have been provided this sheet as you have just had a carpal tunnel decompression surgery. We hope that this provides you with the information you need before you next see a professional.

On Discharge Home:

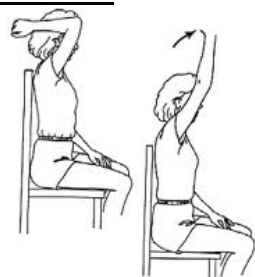
Wound

- Initially after your surgery you will have a bulky dressing on your hand as well as a primary dressing to the wound. It is important that you keep this dry.
- You may be advised to remove the bulky dressing yourself after 48 hours, if so please leave the primary dressing in situ.
- It is expected that you will have your primary dressing changed at your GP surgery or if you are booked in for a clinic review. If in doubt book an appointment with your GP practise nurse!

Swelling

- You may have been provided with a sling to elevate your hand. If you have try not to wear it all the time. Elevation above heart level is important to help alleviate any swelling to the hand, this can be achieved by resting your hand on your opposite shoulder when walking or on pillows when relaxing or sleeping. Keeping your hand always in a sling will prevent movement and gentle active movement will also help it to go down.

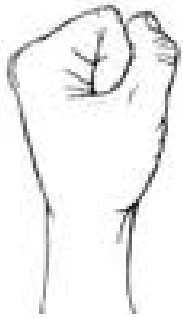
Exercise



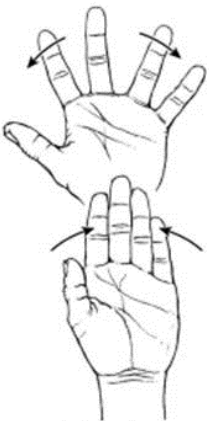
- 1) Bend your elbow, hold 5-10 seconds. Then straighten your elbow and hold for 5-10 seconds.



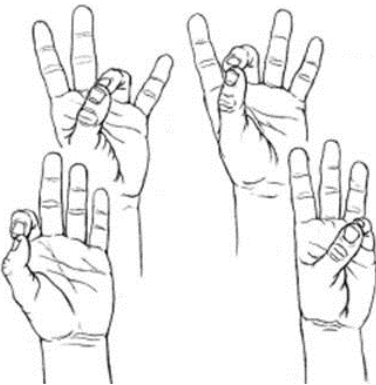
- 2) Hook the tips of your fingers to touch the top part of your palm. Hold for 5-10 seconds.



3) Make a tight fist with all your fingers tucked into your palm. Hold for 5-10 seconds



4) Spread your fingers out into a fan shape, hold for 5-10 seconds then bring them back together.



5) 'Walk' your thumb over to your little finger, and then bend the tip of your thumb to slide it down to the bottom of your little finger. Hold for 5-10 seconds.

- It is important to move your hand regularly even if it is uncomfortable, this is normal.
- Try to do the above exercises regularly throughout the day i.e. every 2-3 hours or 4 times during the day.

10-14 Days after Surgery:

Wound:

- At this stage the wound should be healed and your sutures should have been removed.
- The wound will now be a scar and may be quite tender or sensitive, this is normal.
- It is advised to overcome this that you start massaging your scar in a firm circular movement using non-perfumed hand cream. You should do these 5-10 minutes at a time 3-4 times a day.

Swelling:

- If you feel your hand is still swollen, continue to elevate it as able and actively move it. Try practise making a fist with your hand in elevation.
- Gentle downward massage can also help swelling by moving it away from your hand. Complete this 5-10 minutes at a time. Always stroke down towards your elbow not up towards your hand!

Movement:

- We hope that if you have been doing the above-mentioned exercises you are able to make a full fist.
- You may notice that your strength is still weak. Practise squeezing a soft sponge or soft stress ball; avoid squeezing anything too hard as this may cause pain.
- It is okay to be using your hand for light activities and gradually increasing to heavier activities as able/comfortable.

After two weeks

Please seek a referral to our department if you are unable to make a full fist at this stage and/or have persistent swelling and pain.

We are unable to see you for an appointment without a referral from your GP or Consultant.

Kind Regards,

Hand Therapy Team
Ashford Hospital

Please note, although the Occupational Therapy Department are the authors of this information leaflet we do not take responsibility for any complications that may occur, as we are not the prescriber. The healthcare professional that has provided this to you has done so because in their professional opinion you will benefit from it and take responsibility in doing so.

Name of Provider:.....
 Profession:.....
 Date:.....

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Experience Team on 01932 723553 or email asp-tr.patient.advice@nhs.net. If you remain concerned, the team can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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We can provide interpreters for a variety of languages, information in larger print or other formats (e.g. audio) - please call us on 01932 723553.



To use the Text Relay service, prefix all numbers with 18001.

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