

Pre/Post-Operative Information – Endoscopic Carpal Tunnel Release

What to expect during surgery:

For most patients, Dr. Holt will recommend an endoscopic carpal tunnel release. This surgery is generally performed on an outpatient basis. Dr. Holt will meet you on the day of surgery and review the plan. You will then be taken to an operating room where your hand will be cleaned and draped in preparation for surgery. When performing a unilateral surgery, most frequently the surgery is performed under local anesthesia without sedation. When undergoing bilateral surgery, generally light sedation is given through an IV in addition to local anesthesia. A small incision is made on the palmar side of the wrist. A camera is then placed inside the carpal tunnel and small knife is deployed to release the transverse carpal ligament, which is causing pressure on your median nerve. Once complete, the wound is closed with stitches and a soft dressing is placed.

Pain Control:

Start with simple, but effective pain relief strategies such as ice and elevation. Especially for the first 2 - 3 days, attempt to keep your hand above your heart as much as possible. This will significantly limit pain and swelling. Next, try over-the-counter pain medications such as Tylenol and/or ibuprofen. Most patients tolerate these medications well. Take them with food, and make sure to check your allergies and/or other medications and medical issues to ensure it is safe to take them. Most patients use little or no narcotic medication after carpal tunnel surgery, but Dr. Holt will provide a small prescription of narcotics if needed. Take them as directed and only as needed.

Dressing/Bandage:

Keep your dressing on for 5 days. During that period, keep the dressing and incision clean and dry. Use a plastic bag or cover during showers/hygiene. After 5 days, you can remove the dressing and begin normal hygiene. It's okay to shower and/or wash your hands, but avoid soaking the incision (pools/hot tubs/baths) until your follow up appointment. You can cover the incision with a small band-aid.

Activity:

You may use your hands immediately for light activities of daily living such as feeding yourself, dressing, and using a phone and/or computer. You should avoid lifting/pushing/pulling more than 1 pound and/or the use of power tools and highly repetitive activities for at least 4 – 6 weeks. Additionally, work on the attached finger range of motion exercises multiple times per day. **It is very important to begin moving your fingers right after surgery and keep them moving to avoid stiffness.**

Additional Information:

After surgery, you should expect some pain, swelling, and stiffness. Dr. Holt will talk to you about when it is safe to return to work. Most patients can return to light work (computer/desk work) within a few days, but it will often take 6 – 8 weeks to return to more demanding work (labor, construction, etc.). Grip and hand strength usually come back within 2-3 months after surgery, but it can take up to a 12 – 18 months to fully recover and obtain maximum improvement. Many patients obtain quick and complete relief of the symptoms. However, patients with severe and/or chronic carpal tunnel syndrome, older patients, and patients with certain medical issues may obtain incomplete relief and improvement can be very slow.

Follow-Up:

Your follow up appointment is generally 10 – 14 days after your surgery and should be in your discharge packet on the day of surgery. Call us if you have any questions at (541) 382-3344.



1. Straighten Fingers



2. Knuckle Bend w/
Straight Fingers



3. Karate Chop
(90/90 position)



4. Closed Fist



5. Open & Closed Fingers



5. Thumb to Finger Touch
Finish at Palm Crease

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