

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Numbness and tingling in the hand

HOW YOU RECOGNISE IT

Numbness, tingling or burning in the **thumb, index, middle and half the ring finger** — the little finger is typically spared.

Classically worst at night, waking you, and relieved by shaking or hanging the hand over the edge of the bed.

Also brought on by holding a phone, riding a two-wheeler, or reading a newspaper.

Later, weakness of grip, dropping things, and difficulty with buttons and small objects.

It is caused by pressure on a nerve at the wrist. It is more common in **diabetes, thyroid disease, pregnancy** and after wrist injury.

What helps

- **A night splint is the single most useful treatment.** It holds the wrist straight while you sleep — the nerve is compressed most when the wrist is bent, which happens unconsciously at night. **Wear it every night for at least 6 weeks** before judging it.
- Avoid sleeping with the wrist curled under you or under the pillow.
- **Reduce sustained gripping and vibration** — power tools, two-wheeler handlebars, wringing clothes.
- Adjust your **keyboard and mouse** so the wrist stays straight and is not resting on a hard edge.
- **Nerve gliding exercises** — ask us to show you. A few minutes several times a day.
- **Treat the underlying cause:** control your sugar if diabetic, and get your thyroid checked. In pregnancy it usually settles after delivery.

IF IT DOES NOT IMPROVE

A **steroid injection** into the carpal tunnel often gives good relief and helps confirm the diagnosis, though the benefit may be temporary.

Surgery to release the tunnel is a small, highly effective operation with a very good success rate. It is usually done under local anaesthesia as a day-care procedure.

DO NOT DELAY IF YOU HAVE

Constant numbness that never goes away · visible **wasting of the muscle at the base of the thumb** · weakness of grip or dropping objects

These mean the nerve is being damaged. Nerve recovery after prolonged compression is slow and may be incomplete — **this is the situation where waiting costs you function permanently.**

Search: carpal tunnel, hand numbness, night splint, tingling fingers, wrist pain

