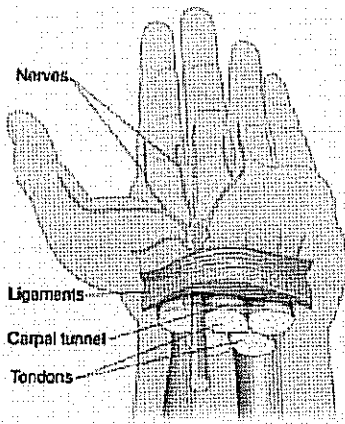




WHAT IS CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME (CTS)?

Your carpal tunnel is a narrow gap running through the bones and ligaments in your wrist. A nerve that gives you feeling in your hand (the median nerve) passes through this tunnel. So do the tendons (cords of tissue) that bend your fingers and wrist.

CTS is caused when there is pressure in the carpal tunnel that compresses the median nerve, causing the nerve to function improperly. Because the carpal tunnel is surrounded by bone on one side, and an inflexible ligament on the other, if pressure builds, the pressure has nowhere to go. Simply put, in carpal tunnel syndrome the nerve gets squished.



Numbness and a "pins and needle" sensation are the most common symptoms experienced in carpal tunnel syndrome. Most often the thumb, index, and middle fingers are involved. Symptoms are often worse upon waking or during activities that involve flexion and extension of the wrist. As the syndrome worsens, decreased grip strength makes it difficult to perform tasks with the involved hand.

WHAT CAUSES CTS?

Carpal tunnel syndrome is often the result of a combination of factors that increase pressure on the median nerve and tendons in the carpal tunnel, rather than a problem with the nerve itself. Common conditions that can lead to carpal tunnel syndrome include obesity, pregnancy, hypothyroidism, arthritis, diabetes, and trauma. Tendon inflammation resulting from repetitive work and/or poor wrist positioning can also cause CTS.

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT FOR CTS?

Early diagnosis and treatment are important to avoid permanent damage to the median nerve. Initial treatment generally involves resting the affected hand and wrist and avoiding activities that may worsen symptoms. If there is inflammation, applying cool packs can help reduce swelling. Stretching and strengthening exercises can be helpful in people whose symptoms have abated. These exercises may be supervised by a physical therapist, who is trained to use exercises to treat physical impairments. Physical therapy can also include massage, TENS, hot/cold, bracing/splinting, postural education, work station analysis, and anti-inflammatory medication through ultrasound or iontophoresis.

If you think you have carpal tunnel syndrome speak with your doctor about starting treatment as this can take sometime to heal.

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NEWSLETTER

January - February 2009

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SUCCESS STORY

"I'm a runner. You probably know one of us. We're stubborn. We run in weather that's dangerous and compete whenever possible. We are able to ignore minor injuries - after all, no pain, no gain! Right? Wrong. After successfully completing a marathon and a summer series of shorter road races I discovered some pain. "Ignore it," I told myself. Generally, that doesn't really work, but always worth a shot when I don't want to stop running. However, when the pain was so excruciating that I could barely walk...I did what every runner should do. I visited my doctor.

After a series of exams, x-rays, etc. it was determined that I was experiencing a compressed vertebrae along with some swelling on the nerve that was causing a sciatica type of pain. My doctor decided to send me to a physical therapist and then she made the best mistake possible. While thinking she was sending me to one place, she actually sent me to Bodywise in Epping. I was leery at first - nervous that I might not get to run again. What I discovered was a cheerful husband/wife team-run clinic where I felt like part of the family after the first visit.

Karen was my primary therapist. She explained clearly what was wrong with my back and then drew up a treatment plan that lasted 6-8 weeks. It included great stretching, eventually some weight lifting and running on the treadmill, and always ended with my favorites - the decompression machine and the heating pad with electrical stimulation."

SUCCESS STORY CONT.

"Not only am I fully recovered, but I was able to shovel wet, heavy snow in the most recent storm, without back pain!! Karen was great about showing me techniques for everyday tasks like picking something up off the floor, proper posture, and of course, shoveling snow.

I was able to experience Ryan's care as well and he is certainly of equal ability. Both Ryan and Karen are friendly and quick to make patients feel comfortable. Although I hope not to need to return, if ever I do, I would not hesitate to return to Bodywise, the best mistake my doctor ever made!"

"Off and running,"

Kathy, Hampton NH

UPDATES

Ryan will be attending an advanced course on treatment of the wrist and hand in February.

On the family front, we had an ultrasound in December and learned that we are having a boy! The ultrasound revealed that the baby is healthy and moving all over the place! Karen is slowly getting bigger and still feeling great.

IF YOU ENJOYED YOUR EXPERIENCE AT
BODYWISE PLEASE LET YOUR FAMILY
AND FRIENDS KNOW WE ARE HERE TO
HELP!

THANKS TO ALL OF OUR PATIENTS
FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

Karen and Ryan Poplaski MPT