



Sara Gordon & Associates

Physiotherapy Newsletter

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome?

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is compression of the median nerve, which is one of the nerves in the arm which runs down the middle of the arm through the wrist into the palm of the hand. The nerves and tendon run through the “carpal tunnel” which is a narrow space bound by the carpal (wrist) bones on one side and an inelastic ligament on the other side. If a tendon becomes inflamed and swells, it may put pressure on the nearby median nerve. Compression of the median nerve can disrupt nerve signals, which means that your sense of touch and your ability to move your hand can be affected.

What Causes Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is also more commonly caused by repetitive strain from excessive typing, which is increasingly more common in our modern lives where computers and mobile phones are everyday items. There are also a variety of other health conditions that can lead to Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, which include diabetes arthritis, gout, obesity, pregnancy, and lupus.

What are the symptoms?

- Numbness
- Tingling
- Pain
- Burning sensation
- Difficulty in gripping
- Dry skin (rare)
- Swelling (rare)
- Discoloration of the skin (rare)

The symptoms are usually worse at night.

What Can Physiotherapy Do To Help?

- Treatment for Carpal Tunnel Syndrome centres on stopping the cause of the condition and reducing the pain.
- Assess the problems fully – often there are problems in the neck and upper back too
- Provision of splints for use at night
- Ultrasound, massage and joint mobilisations
- Advice on working posture and rest.

What Can I do to help?

- Ice and elevation will help the symptoms
- Reducing the aggravating activity or “pacing” the activity
- Anti-inflammatory drugs