



Post Hand Operation Information

You have had your carpal tunnel decompression procedure today. This leaflet gives you advice on how to look after your dressing and what to do in the unlikely event that you have any post-operative complications or just require some advice.

Removal of Stitches

Please contact the Single Point of Access (SPA) on 0300 300 7777 to arrange an appointment to have your stitches removed and your wound checked in 10-14 days' time

Looking After Your Dressing

Keep your hand dry when showering by putting it in a plastic bag and taping the top of the bag securely to your skin. You will get specific advice about your dressing and stitches after your procedure by the clinical assistant.

Pain relief

Take two paracetamol every four to six hours. This is all most people need. If you need stronger pain relief, take one to two codeine phosphate 30 mg tablets as well. You can take codeine at the same time as you take paracetamol. But don't take more than eight paracetamol and eight codeine phosphate in any 24-hour period.

At Home

You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home. You will also need to have someone at home with you for the first 24 hours after the procedure

You may need some extra help after the procedure. For example, you won't be able to put your full weight on your hand, and so won't be able to use a walking stick or walker with that hand for around two weeks.

You may struggle a bit with caring for yourself, so it's important to have someone around to care for you. Some activities, such as opening jars or gripping objects, might be difficult to manage for two to three days.

To reduce swelling and pain it is important to keep your hand raised (elevated) for two to five days, this means your hand should be raised above your heart level.

You will need to avoid firm grasping or lifting for two to three weeks. You may be off work for two to four weeks, depending on your job. Some people can go back to work after one week, while others can't do heavier work for eight weeks or more. The doctor will discuss this with you.

Pain will limit what you can do for around six weeks.

After Your Surgery — Weeks 2–4

- Exercises – 5 to 10 repetitions, 3 times a day

Range of motion exercises:

- Rotate your wrist up and down, side to side
- Stretch your fingers apart, relax them, stretch again
- Stretch your thumb by pulling it back, hold it, then release and repeat

Strengthening exercises:

- Squeeze a rubber ball
- Wrist curls with a 3-pound weight

Scar Management and Desensitisation

During your surgical procedure for carpal tunnel syndrome, your doctor will cut the transverse carpal ligament in your hand, leaving a gap where the ligament was cut. The gap will eventually fill with *scar tissue*.

Over time, the scar tissue matures and becomes less pliable. As it tightens, scar tissue can:

- Interfere with achieving full range of motion
- Cause pain
- Cause hypersensitivity on or around the scar surface

Often, the surgical site/scar and surrounding tissue are left feeling hypersensitive because the scar tissue and swelling have interrupted your skin's sensory nerve fibres.

Performing scar massage and desensitisation techniques can help your sensory nerves to normalize and function properly again.

- Scar massage – Apply thick lotion or cream to your scar in a circular motion (firmly) for 5 minutes at least 4 times per day.
- Desensitization – Rub the scar site for one minute every day.
- Continue with scar massage for 6 months after surgery.