

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME (CTS)

DESCRIPTION

CTS is a condition that may be caused by repeatedly performing stressful motions with your hand or holding your hand in the same position for long periods of time.



SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS

- tingling in the fingers
- numbness in the fingers
- aching in the thumb, perhaps moving up as far as the neck
- burning pain from the wrist to the fingers
- change in touch or temperature sensation
- clumsiness in hands
- weakness in grip, ability to pinch and other thumb actions
- swelling of hand and forearm
- change in sweat functions of hand



FROM AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST'S PERSPECTIVE

CUMULATIVE TRAUMA DISORDER

- AN AILMENT THAT ATTACKS THE BODY'S MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM
- AFFECTS THE SENSITIVE NERVES OF, AND THE BLOOD SUPPLY THAT FEEDS, THE HANDS AND WRISTS



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY CAN HELP WITH

- PARAFFIN WAX TREATMENTS
- MOIST HEAT
- RETROGRADE MASSAGE
- ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RANGE OF MOTION
- STRENGTHENING
- HOME EXERCISE PROGRAM



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Who's at risk?

CTS affects more than 5 million Americans and strikes men and women of all ages. It is often found in workers whose tasks require repeating the same motion in the fingers and hand for long periods, especially those who spend hours at a computer.



OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS RECOMMEND:

- When using a keyboard, move only the fingers—always maintain a straight-wrist position. If your keyboard has a pad at the bottom, use it to rest your wrists during breaks.
- Be sure to practice proper body mechanics. This means good posture—sit with the spine against the back of your chair, shoulders relaxed, elbows along the sides of the body, wrists straight, and feet flat to the floor.
- Typing materials and monitors should be at eye level.
- You should not have to bend your neck over your work. It is important to maintain good posture to assist the circulation and nerve function to the arm/hand region.

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