

About Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused when a median nerve, which provides feeling in the wrist, thumb and fingers, is compressed and becomes swollen and inflamed. The result is a painful stiffness of the hand, wrist, or fingers. The pain can also reach an arm or shoulder.

The debilitating condition is caused by repetitive motion caused by over-using the wrist. It typically affects people who type, or use computers, and is common among carpenters, meat cutters, gymnasts, and supermarket checkers.

Treatments include halting the activity that caused the syndrome, performing the activity differently, and using a splint to keep the wrist from bending while it heals. Anti-inflammatory drugs are also used. In severe cases, a carpal tunnel sufferer may be injected with corticosteroid drugs or undergo surgery to cut the bandlike ligament that is pressing on the median nerve.

Unnecessary delays in treating carpal tunnel may cause loss of function, although the condition need not reach such a stage.