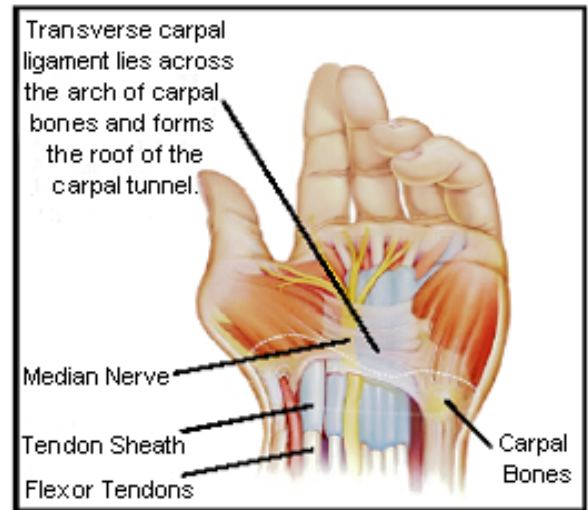


## The Carpal Tunnel

The carpal tunnel is a narrow space inside the wrist that is surrounded by bone and ligament. Tendons, ligaments and the median nerve run through this space.

### What is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome?

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, or CTS, occurs when the tendon sheaths within the carpal tunnel thicken and enlarge. This reduces the amount of space inside the tunnel, and as a result the median nerve may be compressed. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is a specific group of symptoms affecting the fingers or hand and occasionally the forearm and elbow.



### What are the symptoms of CTS?

The most common symptoms of CTS are tingling and numbness. Some people also report hand pain and weakened grip. At first, symptoms may occur during the night. Later, the symptoms may appear during normal daytime activities such as holding a newspaper. The symptoms may become more severe over time.

### What causes CTS?

The most common cause of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is repetitive finger and hand movements. These repetitive, and often strenuous and forceful, hand and finger movements may occur in work, home activities, daily tasks, sports or hobbies.

### Preventing Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Stopping or reducing an activity that stresses the fingers, hand or wrist, or changing the way the activity is done, can prevent most cases of carpal tunnel syndrome.

### Working With your Doctor

If you have any of the symptoms of CTS, or would like to find out more, please schedule an appointment with your orthopaedic doctor or hand surgeon. Your doctor will perform an exam to learn more about your symptoms. Once your doctor makes a diagnosis, he can help you learn more about symptom relief.

### Treatment

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome requires consistent home treatment, and sometimes treatment by a doctor, physical therapist or an occupational therapist. Non-surgical treatment, which may include a wrist splint or cortisone injection, can relieve the pressure and pain in the wrist and hand. A doctor may perform surgery to relieve severe and disabling CTS that has not responded to more conservative treatments. The earlier CTS is diagnosed, the better the chances of relieving the symptoms and preventing permanent damage to the median nerve.