

PATIENT INFORMATION

Instructions After Your Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

GENERAL

Movement: Begin moving your fingers right away after surgery. You should be able to make a full fist and completely straighten your fingers; do this multiple times a day.

- You will not cause any harm by moving your fingers
- If early movement is not performed, you will end up with stiffness that will require hand therapy and rehabilitation

Elevate: To minimize swelling and pain, keep your hand elevated above your heart as much as possible

- Hold your hand against your chest when awake. Place your hand on a few pillows at night

Pain relief: mild pain and discomfort is expected

- You can take Acetaminophen (Tylenol®), and add ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®) if Tylenol® alone is not enough

INCISION CARE

First three (3) days: keep the dressing dry

- When showering, you may wrap your hand in a waterproof plastic bag

After day three (3): remove the dressing

- Wash the incision under clean running water (sink or shower)
 - **Do NOT submerge it in dirty water** (bath, swimming pool or hot tub)
- Dry the skin and incision and cover it with a new bandage. Change it daily for two (2) weeks
 - **Do NOT put Polysporin® on the incision** (it will cause redness and irritation)

At two (2) weeks after surgery: massage the scar

- You can use any over-the-counter cream such as Vaseline® or hand lotion when massaging the scar
 - You may use a scar cream instead, such as SkinCeuticals **Epidermal Repair** or A-Derma **Epitheliale**
 - **Do NOT put Polysporin®** (it will cause redness and irritation)
- Massage the scar along its length for at least 10 minutes, twice per day
- At first, you may notice that the scar is painful or sensitive – this is normal for many people; by massaging the scar, this sensation will go away
- If the knot has not fallen off after two (2) weeks, and it is irritating you, you can trim it flush with the skin
 - If the knot does not bother, you can leave it alone until it falls off on its own

ACTIVITY

First two (2) weeks:

- Do not lift anything heavier than **2 pounds**. Avoid excessive use of your hand, such as typing, cleaning, or cooking. Do not use power tools and other activities that cause vibration
- You may drive when you are able to use your hand to safely control the steering wheel (usually after 5-7 days)

Between 2 -6 weeks:

- You can progressively do more activities, let comfort be your guide. Avoid lifting anything heavier than **10–15 pounds**.

After 6 weeks: No restrictions