

to build up strength and confidence in the hand. However, using the hand normally can be one of the best exercises you can do, as it improves movement and strength.

### Up to 6 months

- At this stage the scar should be pale in colour, almost invisible.
- You should be using the hand normally and strength should have returned. Some patients can experience scar tenderness for up to six months and reduced power in the hand. With exercise and massage, these symptoms will resolve. If this does not happen, please make an appointment to see your GP.
- Most patients will no longer experience any symptoms of pins and needles/ numbness in the hand. If you still have these symptoms, the surgery will have prevented this getting any worse.

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## Exercises

**1. Tip pinch:** Touch the tip of your thumb to the tip of each finger.



**2. Thumb flexion:** Start by stretching the thumb away from the palm. Bend the thumb forward across the palm to try to touch the base of the little finger.



**3. Wrist flexion / extension:** Gently bend your wrist up and hold for five seconds, then bend your wrist down.



Hold each exercise for five seconds, then repeat five times in total.

**Do these four times a day.**

# AllView Healthcare

Patient Information

## Carpal Tunnel

Post-Surgery



If you have any concerns, please contact a member of AllView Healthcare Surgical Nursing Team

**Phone:** 01 224 8100

**Email:** [woundcare@allview.ie](mailto:woundcare@allview.ie)

We are available between the hours:

**9 am – 5 pm Monday – Friday**

## What is the carpal tunnel?

It is a short tunnel which sits between the bottom of the palm of your hand and your wrist. It is made up of small bones in the wrist and a band of soft tissue. It contains a group of tendons which bend your fingers. It also contains the median nerve which is responsible for specific areas of sensation and the movement of your hand.

## What is carpal tunnel syndrome?

This occurs when there is pressure within the carpal tunnel. The median nerve becomes compressed and is unable to function normally. Common symptoms include tingling, or pins and needles in the fingers and hand, particularly at night. Weakness in the hand can occur and you may find that you drop objects.

## Surgery

The procedure is known as carpal tunnel release. This is where the band of soft tissue which forms the roof of the tunnel is released.

## Recovery

### 0-13 days post-operative care

- Your hand will be in a bulky bandage. Try and keep your hand elevated as much as possible.
- You may need to take Paracetamol to control pain in the first 24-48 hours.
- Keep your wrist, fingers and thumb moving as much as possible.
- Keep the dressing clean and dry.

### Day 14 post operative care

- Physiotherapy may be suggested to reduce pain and stiffness as well as improve mobility, range of movement and strength in your affected lower arm, wrist, and hand. Please follow the instructions given by our medical team on the day of your surgery.
- Discard the bulky dressings.
- Your sutures do not need to be removed; they will naturally dissolve in time.
- Continue to move your wrist, fingers and thumb. It is fine to start to use the hand for light activities.

- If the wound is completely closed, wash your hands normally.
- Massage the scar. This will prevent it from becoming tight and sensitive. Using E45 or aqueous cream, massage your scar using small firm circular motions for approximately two to three minutes, three to four times per day. Continue to do this until approximately 12 weeks after surgery.
- You should be able to make a full fist and use the hand for light activities.
- You may occasionally experience mild discomfort if you press or lean on the scar area, this should pass in time.
- You can return to driving once you feel safe to do so.

### Using the hand after 2-3 weeks

- At this stage you should be returning to normal function and if you are not already doing so, you should be planning your return to work. The time taken to return to work will vary depending upon the type of work you do. If your job does not involve heavy lifting or repetitive tasks, getting back to work will be easier. The more manual the job, the longer it will take you