

POSTOPERATIVE CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE: REGIONAL PLASTIC SURGERY CENTER

1. Keep your hand elevated above the level of your heart for 3-5 days. While sitting in a chair or lying in bed, place your arm on pillows to keep it elevated. While walking around, keep your hand elevated on your opposite shoulder. You may discontinue elevation when lowering the hand no longer causes it to throb.
2. A soft dressing is placed at the conclusion of the surgery. This dressing very often feels tight. You are welcome to loosen some of the overlying ACE wrap, but please do not remove the deeper layers.
3. Place a large bag over the dressing when you shower or bathe. Place 2 rubber bands above the dressing to keep the bag in place and prevent leaking.
4. You may remove the dressing completely in 1-3 days, wash gently, and cover the sutures with a bandage or gauze wrap if desired. After endoscopic surgery, a white bandage strip is often placed over the incision. This will fall off on its own after a few days.
5. On the day of surgery, please begin simple exercises by gently opening and closing a fist.
6. Use exposed fingers with light activities, such as eating and dressing.
7. In addition to prescribed pain medication, over-the-counter ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) can be taken every 4-6 hours as needed.
8. A postoperative appointment will be made for 10-14 days following the procedure and sutures are usually removed at this time. If you have endoscopic surgery, suture removal is not necessary.
9. Most patients do not require specialized hand therapy.
10. Return to work instructions and limitations are highly variable, as patients have many different requirements, and specific plans will be developed if necessary at your first follow-up visit.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND CONCERNS:

1. **PAIN AND SWELLING:** Some degree of pain and swelling is expected following any surgical procedure. Please notify the office if pain increases in intensity despite your pain medication and/or swelling increases despite elevation. Ice and heat can be used in moderation if desired.
2. **NUMBNESS AND TINGLING:** Long-acting local anesthetic is usually injected at the conclusion of the surgery. This can lead to numbness of the fingers which can last as long as 24 hours. The surgery itself can also cause temporary numbness that may last for a longer period of time. Please alert your doctor at your postop visit if you have any new numbness that you did not have before surgery.
3. **INFECTION:** Infections following carpal tunnel syndrome are exceedingly rare. Skin irritation and scabbing is common however. Please contact the office if intense redness, streaking, or fever develop.