

PAIN & INJURY GUIDE

Carpal tunnel syndrome: your 5-minute routine



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Hand and wrist exercises described by the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy for carpal tunnel syndrome.

How often: Daily. The CSP says to keep going for at least 6 to 8 weeks to help prevent symptoms returning.

Total time: about 5 minutes. **You will need:** a table.

Before you start

- This is general information based on NHS physiotherapy leaflets. It is not a personal treatment plan. If a doctor, physiotherapist or osteopath has given you different advice, follow that.
- Move slowly and smoothly. Mild discomfort or a stretching feeling is fine. Sharp pain is not.
- The pain should settle back to your usual level within an hour or two. If it is worse the next day, do fewer repeats or a smaller movement, or leave that exercise out for a few days.

Your routine

1

Wrist bends

about 2 min

Rest your elbow on a table with your forearm upright and wrist straight. Gently bend the wrist forwards to a right angle and straighten it. Then gently bend it backwards and return to straight.

How much: Hold each bend 5 seconds, 10 repeats

2

Wrist stretches

about 2 min

Hold your arm out in front, palm down. Gently bend the wrist down and use your other hand to ease the stretch a little further. Then turn the hand palm up, gently bend the wrist back and use your other hand to draw the fingers back.

How much: Hold each stretch 15 to 30 seconds, 3 times each side

3

Finger bends

about 1 min

Start with your fingers held out straight. Gently bend the middle joints of your fingers down towards the top of your palm.

How much: Hold 5 seconds, 10 repeats

Good to know

- Pain usually eases within about two weeks, and recovery takes roughly four to six weeks (CSP).

Easier, or harder?

- Too sore? Do fewer repeats, make the movement smaller, or miss that exercise out for a few days.
- Feeling good? Only add a few repeats, or a second set, when the routine feels easy and comfortable. There is no rush.

Keep track

Tick a box each day you do your routine.

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1							
Week 2							
Week 3							
Week 4							

Get urgent help first, and do not exercise, if you have any of these

Go to A&E or call 999 if you have any of these. They can be signs of a fracture, infection, blood clot or other emergency.

- A limb that looks deformed, or a joint that you cannot move or put weight on after an injury
- A cold, pale or numb foot or hand after injury
- A hot, red, swollen joint with a high temperature
- A painful, swollen, warm calf, with or without breathlessness or chest pain

See your GP promptly, or call NHS 111, if

- Pain after a significant injury, fall or twist
- Pain that is constant, severe or getting worse, or wakes you at night
- Unexplained weight loss, fever or feeling generally unwell with limb pain

Stop these exercises if

- Get help quickly if the muscles in your hand become weak.
- If you are not improving after about 4 weeks, or things are getting worse sooner, get it checked. A GP, physiotherapist or osteopath can assess what is going on and adjust your exercises.

Want your problem assessed?

If you would like your symptoms assessed, you are welcome to book an appointment with Lance Peterson Osteopathy in Chichester: lancepetersonosteopathy.co.uk/book.html · 07899 358698. Osteopathic care is not right for everyone, and if something needs medical attention first, you will be told.

The full plain-English guide, with the common questions and sources, is at:
lancepetersonosteopathy.co.uk/guide/carpal-tunnel-syndrome.html

Based on

The exercises are described in my own words from these NHS and Chartered Society of Physiotherapy resources. Repeats and holds are kept to the gentle, beginner end of the ranges they give. Links were checked in October 2026.

- Chartered Society of Physiotherapy: Carpal tunnel syndrome exercises
<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/rehabilitation-exercises/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>