



APRIL 2017 HEALTHY TIP IT'S ALL IN THE WRIST

It happens more often than you'd like to admit. You're typing away, powering through work, and suddenly you feel a pinch in your wrist. You shrug it off only to feel a stinging sensation moving up and down your forearm. That sensation turns to pain. You don't know it yet, but you could be experiencing carpal tunnel syndrome, or CTS, a nerve-related syndrome that's grown exponentially since employees became attached to their computers.

Women are three times more likely than men to develop carpal tunnel. Typically, the dominant hand is affected first before the pain travels to the other hand. While carpal tunnel is not limited to a specific job, it is important to know the symptoms and prevention tips.



What are the symptoms of carpal tunnel?

- **Family history:** Check your family's history for similar diagnoses in relatives.
- **Improper wrist position:** When typing, place your elbows close to your sides. Your keyboard should rest at a level that doesn't cause your wrists to bend at an angle.
- Wrist injury or trauma that causes swelling.

How can I prevent CTS today?

To reduce your risk of carpal tunnel today:

- **Wear a wrist splint:** When you start feeling wrist pain, splints support and help place your wrist in a neutral position so your tendons can rest and recover. Splints can be worn for a few hours or just at night when sleeping. Typically you should wear a splint within 90 days of feeling CTS.
- **Take breaks:** For every hour you spend working, take a 10 to 15 minute break and allow your muscles and tendons to recover so no swelling occurs.
- **Exercise:** After typing, clench your fists tightly and hold for a second, then stretch your fingers out and maintain that position for a few seconds.

Year-round education and diligence is critical, especially when it comes to wrist protection. Arm yourself with as much knowledge as you can!

Sources:

- <https://www.ninds.nih.gov/Disorders/Patient-Caregiver-Education/Fact-Sheets/Carpal-Tunnel-Syndrome-Fact-Sheet>
- <https://www.womenshealth.gov>

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