



Conquering Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Mission:

We at West U Wellness are committed to serving people who want a natural, higher quality of life for themselves and their families. We acknowledge that physical, chemical, and particularly emotional stress has devastating effects on the nervous system. Chiropractic adjustments remove this nervous system interference. Therefore, we go to extraordinary measures in educating society about the benefits of chiropractic care for optimal health.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

There is a group of small bones that make up your wrist and the base of your hand called "carpals." To allow nerves and tendons to pass through to your fingers, there is a tunnel through these bones called the "carpal tunnel." Through this tunnel pass nine tendons and a bundle of nerve fibers called the "median nerve." There is limited room in this tunnel, and if anything happens to cause swelling of any of the tissues, the median nerve will be compressed, at first causing irritation, then over time causing actual nerve damage. Since the median nerve includes both sensory fibers (carrying information about touch to the brain) and motor fibers (carrying impulses from the brain to move the fingers), this irritation or damage results in numbness, pain, and possibly even partial paralysis. The muscles most likely to be affected are the muscles forming the ball of your thumb. It is important to remember, that things other than carpal tunnel syndrome can cause pain and movement problems in your wrist and hand.

The progress of carpal tunnel syndrome is usually predictable. First, the small nerve fibers that are not insulated are affected, then the larger insulated sensory fibers, then the larger insulated motor, or movement fibers. These changes can be the result both of direct irritation to the nerve and of loss of blood to the nerve.

By the time a person goes to the doctor complaining of numbness, pain or movement problems, the last condition -- damage to the motor fibers -- has usually come about. At that point, a neurologist or a professional specializing in electrical measurements of nerve performance can perform tests that will determine whether the condition is early, moderate or severe.

The median nerve is all by itself in the tunnel among these tendons. Anything that causes tissues to swell can cause this problem, and anything that reduces the swelling and increases the flow of blood to the nerve can help it.

Why do some workers get it and others not? Posture, ergonomics, and vitamin B-6 deficiency are some contributing factors. While carpal tunnel syndrome is not fully understood, chiropractic can help in many cases.

The Neck -- Wrist Connection

In many cases of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), a second source of compression occurs in the neck where the median nerve begins! Cervical vertebrae (neck bones) can misalign as a result of poor posture, bad habits like cradling a phone with your neck or sleeping on your stomach; and from previous neck trauma, like a car accident.



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The neck vertebrae can compress the median nerve and produce symptoms similar to those caused by compression of the median nerve inside the wrist! Doctors refer to this condition as a "double lesion neuropathy," or "double crush syndrome."

Even if treatment to the wrist successfully removes nerve compression in that location, symptoms will continue to persist if nerve compression in the neck remains!

It is because of this that CTS treatment limited to the wrist and hand is often insufficient and ineffective. Many doctors fail to examine the neck when diagnosing and treating CTS, and unfortunately, many CTS sufferers do not get the treatment that they really need

So what should you do? If you believe that you are developing carpal tunnel syndrome, you should seek a doctor who specializes in treating this disorder and who completely understands how neck problems relate to CTS. If you have already been diagnosed with CTS and have been receiving standard medical treatment described above with no results, you should consult this type of doctor for a second opinion.

What Can Be Done?

We have been successfully treating cases of carpal tunnel syndrome in Houston for four years now. Our treatment takes into consideration all factors that can contribute to the pain and discomfort associated with CTS. We examine each patient for potential median nerve compression sites starting in the neck, then shoulder, elbow, wrist, and hand. Gentle chiropractic adjustments are done to these areas to realign joints and remove pressure that they may be placing on the median nerve. We do myofascial release and soft tissue mobilization, which helps to relax stiff muscles in the neck and arms that may also be contributing to nerve compression. Neck and wrist traction are gentle procedures used to help reduce nerve

pressure in these areas. In addition to all this, we educate our patients on proper workstation set-up (ergonomics), exercises and stretches, proper body mechanics (posture), and diet.

Our practice, situated near Greenway Plaza, was designed with the busy office worker in mind. These days, most office workers rely on a computer to get their work done, whether it's data entry, word processing, programming, accounting, or Internet use. Although computer usage has simplified office work, it comes with a price. It requires us to place ourselves in harmful, stressful positions that our bodies were not designed to handle. First of all, it demands prolonged sitting. Over time, this can lead to weak back muscles and disc damage to the spine. Monitors sit low and are usually placed at an angle that forces the worker to bend and repetitively turn her neck. This can cause repetitive strain injuries (RSI) to the neck and shoulders and can also subluxate, or misalign neck vertebrae causing them to compress the nerves to the arms. Desktops are frequently too high or too low, which places strain on her arm, wrist, and hand muscles. Add typical office duties like repetitive filing, writing, and pulling of heavy binders and it is easy to see why many office workers in Houston injure themselves.

Of course, computer and office jobs are not the sole causes of CTS. Any occupation or activity which requires repetitive motion of the fingers or wrist exposes the worker to the possibility of developing CTS (including but not limited to seamstresses, writers, hair stylists, bus drivers etc.) Actually, almost any body part is fair game for what is called cumulative trauma disorder, a term doctors apply to injury caused by repetitive motion. Assembly line workers are especially susceptible to such injuries. That's because repetitive irritation, including stress, strain, sprain, physical tension, prolonged tautness, or pressure, can produce a cumulative trauma disorder such as CTS. Just as in other structural problems, once carpal tunnel syndrome begins to develop, early intervention is a must for avoiding permanent injury.



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Our treatment approach to carpal tunnel syndrome and repetitive strain injuries is extremely popular among local Houston office workers because of its effectiveness and non-invasiveness. We do not prescribe potentially harmful medications, give cortisone injections, or perform surgery. We do, however, work with talented medical doctors in the event that such drastic measures become necessary. Most medical doctors agree that a non-invasive

approach is the preferred approach in treating carpal tunnel syndrome.

If you are experiencing pain or numbness, it is worth your time to investigate our treatment methods. Be aware that pressure to the median nerve left uncorrected can lead to long-term nerve damage and loss of function. Don't compromise the full use of your hands. Call or e-mail us today for a consultation with one of our doctors.

Fit for Life Program

***High cholesterol? Rising blood pressure or blood sugar?
Gaining weight? Lack of energy and activity?***

Join West U Wellness' 8-week doctor-supported "Fit for Life" program!

Each week you will meet at our clinic to take measurements such as cholesterol, blood pressure, blood glucose, height, weight and body fat. You will be given proven exercises, equipment, and nutritional advice to help you achieve your ideal body weight. A personal trainer will lead the exercises and participants may be eligible for a one-month free pass to 24 Hour Fitness. As a bonus, you can join our West U Walking Club which will meet three times a week. A great deal for only \$150.00!

**Only a few spaces remain for the next session so act now.
Call (713) 490-2225 to sign-up.**

Dr. Sherman Yeager & Dr. Caroline Long are available to give free "stress management" lectures to a variety of groups. If you would like us to speak at your company or have us come to offer free spinal screenings at your place of work, your school or your church, please contact our office at (713) 490-2225.

West U Wellness hosts or participates in numerous events and activities each month. Included in these events are free health talks covering a different topic every **Tuesday at 6:00 PM** in West U Wellness. We believe these talks to be a means of allowing our patients to improve their lifestyles.

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****Join us this coming Tuesday, September 7th
at 6:00pm for information on how
chiropractic can help with childhood
illnesses like asthma, ear infections,
colic, and ADD/ADHD.***

September Calendar of Events

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 Childhood Illness Health Talk*	8	9	10	11 West U Wellness Open
12	13	14 Exercise & Fitness Health Talk	15 TSU Health Fair	16	17	18
19	20	21 Stress Management Health Talk w/ Pilates	22	23	24	25 West U Wellness Open
26	27	28 TMJ Health Talk w/ Dr. Howes, DDS	29	30		