

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: A Few Tips for Preventing It

In some jobs, you use your hands a lot ...

assembly lines, construction, or even working as a cook.

And people who work with their hands or use their hands a lot may get carpal tunnel syndrome.

That's because using your hands in certain ways may put pressure on a nerve that runs through a narrow space in your wrist.

This space is called the carpal tunnel.

Pressure on this nerve can cause pain, tingling, weakness, and other problems in your hand.

So what type of actions do you need to be careful about?

Actions where you bend or twist your wrist, like using a screwdriver.

Repeated movements are also a problem.

Chopping ... hammering ... knitting ... Well, you get the picture.

And using tools that vibrate ... such as sanders or drills ... can also lead to carpal tunnel.

So, because using your hands in these ways can help cause carpal tunnel syndrome, making a few changes may help prevent it.

These changes may also help improve your symptoms or keep them from getting worse.

We like to think of these changes as the 4 Ss.

The first S is straight wrists.

Keep them straight, and twist them as little as possible.

For example, when I type like this, with my wrists bent ... that's not a good thing.

This is how I want to type.

Keep the wrists straight, with the hands a little higher than the wrists.

The same goes when using a mouse.

Keep your wrist straight, and try not to bend it.

And when you type ... or knit ... keep your forearms parallel to the floor.

The second S is stop, and take a break.

Stretch your hands and wrists. Get up and move around.

And the third S--slow down.

Reduce how fast or how strongly you do an action.

And the last S? Switch hands or positions if you can.

And try not to grip things with just your thumb and index finger.

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Use your whole hand if possible.

And if you're using power tools ... try wearing gloves that are designed to help support your wrists and have padding to help absorb vibration.

And remember ...

stop doing anything you think is causing numbness or pain.

Take a break and try again.

Start slowly, and maybe use your other hand.

If things don't get better, see your doctor.

The four Ss may help you prevent carpal tunnel syndrome and help with any symptoms.

Would any of these work for you?

Pick one and see if it helps.