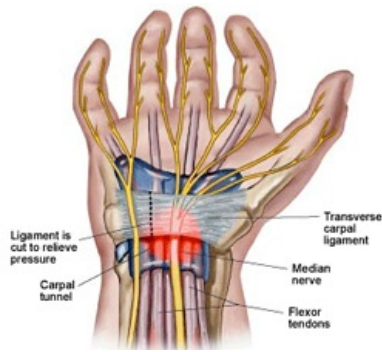


HOW TO AVOID CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME



Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is one of the most common workplace injuries, and can leave workers in pain, decrease their productivity, and even prevent them from holding down a job at all. According to The National Institutes of Health, CTS: "...occurs when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm into the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist... The carpal tunnel - a narrow, rigid passageway of ligament and bones at the base of the hand - houses the median nerve and tendons. Sometimes, thickening from irritated tendons or other swelling narrows the tunnel and causes the median nerve to be compressed. The result may be pain, weakness, or numbness in the hand and wrist, radiating up the arm."

While many things can cause CTS, one common cause is stress from repetitive hand and wrist movements -- exactly the kind of movements you make when writing, typing and using a computer mouse. CTS is treated with drugs, physical therapy, and/or surgery. Fortunately, there are things you can do to help prevent CTS.

- Perform stretching exercises
 - Take frequent rest breaks
 - Wear splints to keep your wrists straight
 - Use correct posture and wrist position -- back straight, forearms level with the desktop
 - Use an ergonomic mouse
- Just by being aware of the danger, you can take steps to ensure that you're never afflicted with CTS.