

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME - CUMULATIVE TRAUMA DISORDERS

One of the most expensive and poorly treated conditions of the computer era is carpal tunnel syndrome. It has frequently been poorly diagnosed and the treatment of this common condition costs business and industry thousands of dollars in lost work time and disability. It is most common among people who type on computer keyboards or who perform other repetitive tasks with their hands, arms, shoulders and neck. Current treatment methods often fail to bring long term results and sometimes results in worsening disability. Common treatments used for the condition are wrist splints, massage, injections into the area of pain and discomfort, medications, nutritional supplements, physical therapy, exercises including stretching and finally when all else fails, surgery. Recently, these arm conditions have more appropriately been reclassified as Cumulative Trauma Disorders (CTD's).

Typical Symptoms

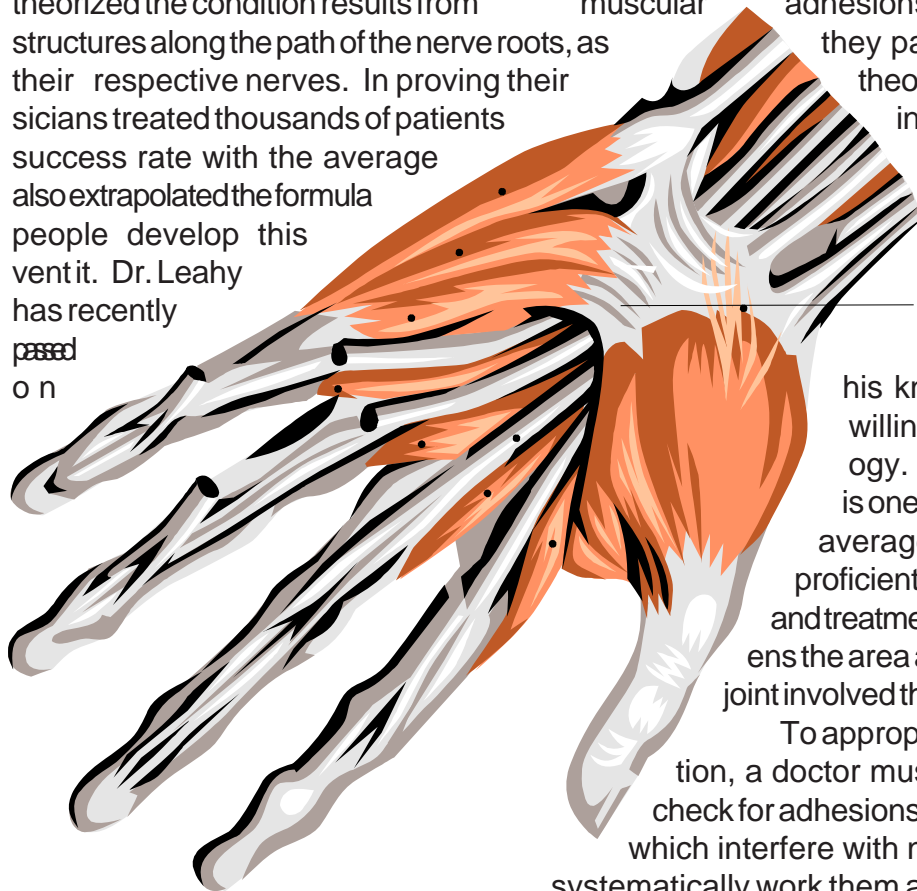
The typical CTD sufferer may note the following:

- **Arm/Hand/wrist pain.**
- **Arm/Hand Numbness.**
- **Raising the arm makes the hand go numb(Nerve root adhesion).**
- **Numbness in the first finger and thumb(true carpal Tunnel).**
- **Numbness in entire hand or finger tips(Nerve root adhesion).**
- **Wrist pain/thumb pain.**
- **Shoulder Pain.**
- **Neck Pain**
- **Stiffness in the hand or forearm.**

Appropriate diagnosis

Commonly, to diagnose the condition, patients have been subjected to Nerve Conduction tests and simple orthopedic tests which make the hand go numb. CTD's actually are comprised of quite a number of different conditions which must be diagnosed properly to be treated successfully. The truth is, more often than not, the condition does not involve the Carpal Tunnel.

Dr.'s Leahy and Mock¹ in their article from Chiropractic Sports Medicine published in 1995 theorized the condition results from muscular adhesions in the forearm and other structures along the path of the nerve roots, as they pass down from the neck to their respective nerves. In proving their theories, these chiropractic physicians treated thousands of patients in Colorado showing a 96% success rate with the average case lasting six visits. He also extrapolated the formula which explains why people develop this problem and how to prevent it. Dr. Leahy has recently passed on



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his knowledge to other doctors willing to learn this new technology. Your doctor of chiropractic is one of those doctors. It takes an average of two years to become proficient at this method of evaluation and treatment. Myofascial Release loosens the area and the doctor mobilizes the joint involved through joint manipulation. To appropriately diagnose this condition, a doctor must examine the entire arm, check for adhesions (tissues stuck to each other which interfere with normal nerve function) and systematically work them away by hand. When this is done properly, the problem often resolves quickly and with appropriate periodic exercises, usually does not return. No other treatment method at this time is capable of achieving results like this. This is the reason major workers compensation insurers in Colorado have utilized Dr. Leahy's clinic. You can expect similar outcome's from a proficient Myofascial Release Practitioner.

Appropriate Treatment Myofascial Release Technique's

One must define what is appropriate in the treatment of CTD. A good definition is "Any treatment method which is cost effective, yields reliable results in the majority of the population and is scientifically valid." Current treatment methods do not meet this criteria. The typical CTD case costs an average of \$15,000 including the surgery. Many other therapeutic approaches, including wrist manipulation show promise in the treatment of the condition although dysfunctional muscles and soft tissues will not allow for proper wrist joint function since there is often limited flexibility of the areas where the adhesions exist.

Myofascial Release Technique's meets the criteria for "Appropriate Treatment." It is a cost effective method which often results in quick resolution of the condition and its symptoms. Many of the more difficult cases, including those that failed with surgery have succeeded. Many Ctd's respond favorably to treatment within six visits or less. Many other common arm complaints such as tendonitis (tennis elbow, golfers elbow) and shoulder complaints are present when a patient has the CTD syndrome. Myofascial Release treatment can resolve these problems as well. There is a cascade of events (called the kenetic chain) which includes neck motion, shoulder motion, elbow motion and wrist motion. Any dysfunc-

tion along this kenetic chain can result in common overuse syndromes of the arm, shoulder and wrist. A thorough practitioner will often check the relationship of these structures when a CTD is present.

The treatment consists of the doctor checking for adhesions and working them away by hand as he/she finds them on each session. The treatment is usually not painful and the area being treated may experience soreness for a day or two following the treatment. An experienced practitioner can very quickly resolve many of these conditions and will give you appropriate exercise designed to prevent a reoccurrence.

For further information, please ask your chiropractic physician.

1. Improved Treatments for Carpal Tunnel and related Syndrome's. Chiropractic Sports Medicine Vol9 #1 1995 Pgs. 6-9, Williams and Wilkins.

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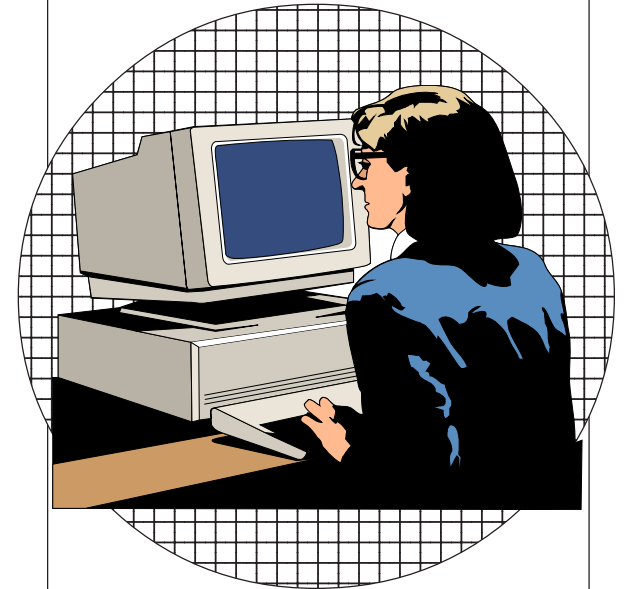


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