

Top 5 Carpal Tunnel Exercises You Can Do

Living with the pain of Carpal Tunnel can be debilitating, especially if your day often includes repetitive tasks like typing or knitting. However, there are several stretches and exercises you can bring into your routine that can help mitigate that pain.

None of these exercises take long, and they are most effective when you can pepper them throughout your day.

Wrist Flexor Stretch

Stretching and strengthening the muscles in your forearm and wrist can help relax and support your carpal tunnel.

Start by extending one arm in front of you with your palm facing up. Use your other hand to gently bend your wrist backward until you feel a stretch in your forearm.

Hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds and repeat on the other side. Aim for 3-5 repetitions on each side.

Wrist Extensor Stretch

Similar to the wrist flexor stretch, this exercise acts as its opposite. You can easily perform both of these stretches at the same time, making them easy to keep track of.

Extend one arm in front of you with your palm facing down. Use your other hand to gently bend your wrist downward until you feel a stretch in the top of your forearm.

Hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds and repeat on the other side. Perform 3-5 repetitions on each side.

Median Nerve Gliding

Median nerve gliding helps you engage the nerve within your carpal tunnel, fighting the compression and irritation causing pain.

Start by placing your arm on a table with your palm facing down. Gently bend your wrist upward while sliding your fingers toward your elbow. Then, bend your wrist downward while sliding your fingers back toward your palm.

Repeat this movement 10 times and then switch to the other hand.

Finger Stretch

These are a great way to help mitigate pain throughout the day, especially if you find yourself doing repetitive tasks.

Hold your hand in front of you with your palm facing down. Gently spread your fingers apart as much as possible without causing any pain.

Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds and then release. Repeat this exercise 10 times on each hand.

Forearm Pronation and Supination

If you're looking for something a little more intense to stretch out your muscles a couple times a week, you can grab a weight to strengthen your forearms.

Start by holding a small weight (such as a dumbbell or a water bottle) in your hand. Rest your forearm on a table or armrest, with your wrist hanging over the edge.

Slowly rotate your forearm, turning your palm up (supination) and then palm down (pronation). Perform 10-15 repetitions in each direction.

Remember to start these exercises slowly and gradually increase intensity as your symptoms permit. If you experience any pain or discomfort, stop and rest.

It is not necessary to do all five exercises every day. Ideally, you should aim to incorporate a combination into your daily routine.

In our free, printable carpal tunnel PDF, you can easily reference all the exercises and check them off as you do them throughout the week. Even if you don't fill in the tracker entirely, simply [keeping a log](#) of your exercises will allow you to stay consistent.

Listen to your body and adjust the frequency and intensity of the exercises based on your own comfort level and symptoms.

Wrist Flexor/Extensor Stretch - 2-3 Times a Day

- Start by extending one arm in front of you with your palm facing up. Use your other hand to gently bend your wrist backward until you feel a stretch in your forearm.
- Hold the stretch for 15-30 seconds, then switch to your palm facing down.

Median Nerve Gliding - Once a Day

The median nerve glide, also known as median nerve flossing or gliding, is a series of movements designed to improve the flexibility and mobility of the median nerve. The median nerve is a major nerve that runs from the neck down the arm, and issues related to its mobility can contribute to conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome or other nerve-related issues. The glide is often used as part of rehabilitation or to alleviate symptoms associated with nerve compression.

- Position your arm on a table with your palm facing down. Gently bend your wrist upward while sliding your fingers toward your elbow. Then, bend your wrist downward while sliding your fingers back toward your palm.
- Do 8-10 reps for each hand.

Finger Stretch - 4-5 Times a Day

- Hold your hand in front of you with your palm facing down. Gently spread your fingers apart as much as possible without causing any pain.
- Hold the stretch for 10-15 seconds and then release.

Forearm Pronation/Supination - 2-3 Times a Week

- Hold a small weight in your hand. Rest your forearm on a table or armrest, with your wrist hanging over the edge.
- Slowly rotate your forearm, turning your palm up and then palm down.

Activities to Stay Away From

Some activities will aggravate your carpal tunnel more, leading to worse pain. Those suffering with CTS should avoid:

- **Repetitive Movements** - Typing, writing, knitting, or using a computer mouse extensively.

- **Forceful Gripping** - Using power tools, gripping heavy objects, or squeezing hand grips tightly.
- **Excessive Wrist Extension/Flexion** - Playing musical instruments, painting, or prolonged phone use.
- **Vibrating Tools** - Operating drills, jackhammers, or chainsaws.
- **Cold Temperatures** - Reducing blood flow can increase stiffness in the hands and wrists.

By limiting these activities, consistently exercising, and finding ways to mitigate pain, people with CTS can still enjoy all their favorite things. The only difference will be the need for moderation.