



What does carpal tunnel release (CTR) involve?

CTR is a simple procedure that takes 20-30 minutes and is usually done using local anaesthetic. A 3 - 4cm long incision is made in the palm overlying the carpal tunnel. This skin and soft tissue is separated, and the transverse carpal ligament identified and divided. The median nerve is visualized and any constricting soft tissue released. The skin is then sutured.

What are the risks with CTR?

CTR is a relatively straightforward procedure and complications are rare. They include pain, stiffness, infection, injury to nerves and blood vessels in the area. Please discuss this with your surgeon in greater detail prior to surgery.

What do I need to do after surgery?

The dressing should be kept clean and dry. Please use the water-guard we provide during shower or other activities where the dressing may get wet. It is advisable to keep the hand elevated using a sling when walking around and using a pillow when lying down for about two weeks.

What should I avoid after surgery?

The skin wound takes about 10 days to heal and 4 weeks to become strong. You should therefore avoid carrying heavy weights with the operated hand and avoid activities that load the heel of the hand for 4 weeks. For eg., using the heel of the hand in getting up from a sitting position and tight gripping activities.

Will it be painful?

There may be some pain especially 6-8 hours after surgery as the effect of the local anaesthetic wears off. It is therefore important to take the pain killers as prescribed. Severe pain requiring strong analgesics is rare and if you have increasing or severe pain, please do not hesitate to contact us.

What will the dressing look like after surgery?

A soft bulky dressing is applied immediately after surgery. This allows free movement of the fingers, while restraining wrist movement. This dressing is usually changed to a simple adhesive plaster at the time of your clinic review 3-7 days after surgery.

When can I drive?

It is better to avoid driving for two weeks (till the stitches are removed). Subsequently you can start driving provided you feel comfortable and have enough strength and control to drive.

When can I go back to work?

This depends on the type of job you are doing and how fast you recover. If it is mostly administrative with some paper-work, you may be able to return to light duties after the first review in clinic (3-5 days after surgery). Most patients should be able to return to light duties after removal of the stitches (10-14 days). If your job involves heavy manual work, it may be safer to wait for at least 4 weeks before returning to work.