

# How I Healed My Carpel Tunnel Syndrome

Jan. 8, 2010

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A few months ago after joining the gym, I gave myself “carpel tunnel syndrome.” Of course, it wasn’t on purpose, but it was because I was uninformed about the proper way to use weights, even though I had used weights many times in the past at other gyms and at home.

The injury was only a few months ago so I am still healing but the pain has disappeared.

The reason I wanted to write this article was to alert anyone thinking about working out in a gym, so they won’t go down the same path that I did and give themselves carpel tunnel syndrome.

Everyone wants to see results when they join a gym. But I learned the hard way and the goal should be to slow your rhythm while lifting weights.

“Carpel Tunnel Syndrome” is known as repetitive strain injuries, which include the trigger finger, nerve spasms, and carpel tunnel syndrome. The carpel tunnel is a very small opening about one-quarter inch below the surface of the wrist through which the median nerve passes.

Carpel Tunnel Syndrome occurs when the median nerve in the wrist is compressed or damaged. The median nerve controls the thumb muscles and is also responsible for sensation felt in the thumb, the palm, and the first three fingers of the hand. It is associated with repetitive wrist motion injury which is linked to continuous rapid use of the fingers and this is what happened to me.

Carpel Tunnel Syndrome was once considered an occupational hazard affecting ONLY supermarket checkout clerks and bookkeepers. But in the 1980s when personal computers came to dominate the workplace, many employees started reporting cases of carpel tunnel syndrome.

The median nerve can be injured from a number of sources such as pregnancy or water retention, pressure from bone spurs, diabetes, bond dislocation or fractures, inflammatory arthritis, tendinitis, menopause, obesity, Raynaud’s disease and hypothyroidism.

Carpel Tunnel Syndrome can also be caused by strong, steady vibrations that shake the wrist for long periods such as a jackhammer or chain saw. It also includes other workers such as assembly line workers, athletes, drivers, hairstylists, musicians, restaurant servers, and writers like me.

Today, carpal tunnel is a well-known among people who use computers extensively. Since I am a writer, I was already susceptible to the illness so once I started lifting weights in an awkward and repetitive manner, it brought on the illness.

Although carpal tunnel affect both sexes, women between the ages of 29 and 62 seem to be affected more than any other segment of the population.

People with square wrists (wrists that are roughly as deep as they are wide) are said to be more disposed to getting carpal tunnel syndrome than people whose wrists are wider than they are deep.

Symptoms can range to mild numbness and faint tingling to excruciating pain accompanied by crippling muscles in the thumb. Most commonly, it is experienced as burning, tingling, or numbness in the thumb and the first three fingers. The little finger is spared because it receives its nerve impulses from outside the carpal tunnel.

Symptoms are often worse at night or in the morning, when circulation slows down. Pain may spread to the forearm and, in severe cases, to the shoulder. It can even go to the neck, upper back and/or shoulders. A visit to the chiropractor can help you determine whether this is the case. Again, this is a condition that can be misdiagnosed so pay close attention to your body.

After explaining my symptoms to my daughter who is also a writer, she explained that she also had the condition while in college. After conducting research and understanding some of the symptoms I was experiencing, I was able to alleviate the pain within a few weeks. I felt extremely lucky because I was able to take a hold of the illness before it spread. Only my index finger on my left hand gave me a problem. The tip of the finger had frozen and I was able to realize it was carpal tunnel in time before it spread to my other fingers or other hand. Most of the time if you have carpal tunnel in one hand, it will also spread to the other hand if you don't start some type of treatment in time. If it reaches your thumb area, many doctors will recommend surgery. Again, do your own research before going under the knife with any doctor.

As a writer of articles and books, former clerk typist, administrative specialist and secretary and being confined to a computer most of the day, I had escaped having carpal tunnel all those years. But now simply because I had not done my research before joining the gym, I had injured myself. Any type of injury can take weeks or months to heal and really derail any type of workout so try to be careful when using any piece of equipment in gyms or when conducting repetitive or awkward motions with free weights.

The most alarming fact that I found out about carpal tunnel syndrome is that it can take anywhere from up to 2 years to totally heal. And if you do not diagnose the illness soon enough, then you can cause permanent damage to your nerves.

Whether you get carpal tunnel from working out at the gym, working in a factory or being on a computer all day – it can be quite a debilitating illness.

**The Steps I Took To Alleviate the Pain So My Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Could Heal:**

- 1) **Halt All Exercises:** Once my finger froze and the pain started in my wrist area, I knew I needed to stop all repetitive finger movements for several days to see if any improvements occurred especially the activities that I knew had caused the carpal tunnel syndrome.
- 2) **Ice the Area:** When I initially figured out what was going on with my body, I iced both wrists areas. Remember the wrist area is what controls the entire hand and it's the area that needs to be treated.
- 3) **Wear Hand Braces:** I had to keep my wrists straight so one of the first significant steps I had to take was to buy two hand braces to wear as much as possible during the day and sleep in at night. Even though the pain was only in one hand, I wanted to keep it from spreading so I wore both braces.
- 4) **Change Your Diet:** By the time I was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome, I realized that your diet plays a major role in how you feel period. I knew I needed to avoid all foods containing sodium which promotes inflammation, water retention and swelling. I needed to consume these foods only in moderation: parsley, asparagus, beets, beet greens, eggs, fish, spinach, etc. but needed to include these foods in my diet that were high in B-6 such as bananas, avocados, potatoes, nuts, tuna, wild caught salmon and whole grains. If you are overweight, then you should lose weight because excessive weight also aggravates the condition.
- 5) **Eat Pineapples:** Eating pineapples will be key to stopping your pain. You should eat half of a fresh pineapple daily for one to three weeks, until relief is achieved. Pineapples contains bromelain, which reduces pain and swelling. Only fresh pineapple is effective. Bromelain is also available in capsule form but you always want to go natural verses taking any type of capsule.
- 6) **Cayenne Pepper:** Cayenne Pepper contains capsaicin which relieves pain.
- 7) **Take B Vitamins:** If you have been diagnosed with carpal tunnel remember B-vitamins are for your nervous system and carpal tunnel is nothing more than your nerves acting up. So take Vitamin B-1, B-6, and B-Complex to help keep your symptoms under control.
- 8) **Ginkgo Biloba:** Ginkgo Biloba taken in tea or capsule form, is beneficial for improving circulation and also aids nerve function.

- 9) **St. John's Wort:** St. John's Wort stimulates circulation and helps to restore local nerve impulse transmission.
- 10) **Reevaluate Your Sitting Position:** As a writer, I knew I did not want to stop writing so I had to make sure I wore my "hand braces" and looked closely at my posture while working at the computer. The goal was to make sure I was keeping my wrists level with my hands when I was on the computer. Many might want to even use a "wrist rest" pad in front of the keyboard to alleviate pressure from carpal tunnel. I also took more breaks than I had before.
- 11) **Restore Circulation:** Remember carpal tunnel is caused by "poor circulation" so make sure you are restoring circulation to this area by using a stress ball at least 3 times a day. You can also shake out your hands periodically throughout the day. Another gentle exercise is done by rotating your wrists. Move the hands around in a circle for about 2 minutes several times a day
- 12) **Get Plenty of Rest:** Stress aggravates your carpal tunnel syndrome and your nervous system so make sure you are getting plenty of rest if you are diagnosed with this illness.

When I decided to continue my workouts, I worked my lower body, but was very careful how I grabbed weights after that. I made sure I used my whole hand and all of my fingers when I gripped the weights and before I knew it, I was pain free!

### **The 3 Dangers of Working Out in a Gym**

The three dangers of working out in a gym are: 1) Underqualified Staff, 2) Bacterias on equipment and in shower areas, and 3) Faulty Equipment.

- 1) **Underqualified Staff:** I had initially worked with a trainer who took me through a couple of weeks of rigorous exercising. But when I tried to keep up the momentum on my own I gave myself this condition. But still there are many unqualified trainers in gyms so make sure you do your own research before starting any workout program.
- 2) **Bacterias on Equipment and In Shower Area:** The goal is to wipe off equipment and wear gloves if you are coming directly behind someone else while using equipment in gyms. Make sure you wear shoes at all times while in the shower or pool area.
- 3) **Faulty Equipment:** Many people have become partially or totally paralyzed or killed because of faulty equipment in gyms so it's important for you to stay vigilant and report any malfunctioning equipment to the management of the gym. If the equipment that you report is a piece of equipment that you usually use to workout, make sure you inquire about its safety before using it again.

## **Other Important Steps to Take When Joining a Gym**

Get a physical before starting a workout program then start off slowly. Make sure you stretch for 5 minutes. Try to do 5 minute flexibility each time you work out and ½ hour of strength training several times a week. If you injure yourself take a few days off until you heal and eat more foods or take supplements containing Vitamin C and zinc to help you heal.

Try to eat one hour before going to the gym and one hour after working out. Sip on water while you work out and if you have an intense workout drink a sports drink with potassium and electrolytes such as Gatorade.

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