



The Fitness Enthusiasts Guide to Relieving Wrist Pain

Discover 4 Common Causes for Wrist Pain and What To Do About It



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Aside from a fall on an outstretched hand (which will definitely result in wrist pain!), the following situations describe 4 common reasons for wrist pain.

WHICH SCENARIO FITS YOU?

Common Cause #1: Overuse – Repetitive Strain Injury or Tendonitis

“Yoga makes me feel so great, except my wrists!” You're feeling your edge in yoga class as you flow through your sun salutations, but each time you move from plank to chattaranga to upward dog your wrists hurt more and more. The pain becomes distracting, annoying then unbearable.

Symptoms of Tendonitis:

- Begins as nagging pain at the site of the tendon and surrounding muscles
- Constant pain -over time pain and stiffness increases
- Aggravated by wrist movement at full ranges or when resistance & body weight is applied
- Symptoms worsen when using hands in daily tasks gripping, picking up heavy objects, using mouse
- Swelling in the joint or surrounding area
- Sometimes redness and warmth will occur at the site of pain

What Causes It:

- Repetitive movements
- Movements that cause stress to the muscle & tendon -not warming up before exercise, excessive resistance or stretch, sudden or jerky movements
- Injury to the muscle or tendon then resuming activity before fully healed
- Reduced muscle strength increases stress on tendons

How to Manage It:

- Complete Rest to allow healing ~ 3+ weeks
- Splints to immobilize may be necessary
- Eliminate activity or modify position to avoid stress on tendons (do planks on elbows not hands)



- Reduce swelling – Cold pack or wrap a bag of frozen peas around wrist and elevate hand
- Mild compression wraps
- Topical pain reducing creams (Topercin, Biofreeze, etc.)
- Anti-inflammatory medication and steroid injections (as prescribed by MD)

Prevention:

- Lessen repetitive movement and extreme range of motion
- Alter workout schedule and mix it up. Ex: Don't do vinyasa flow yoga or burpees 5 days a week
- Listen to your body and don't push through the pain
- Strengthen fingers, wrists and arms
- Correct muscle imbalances (strengthen finger and wrist extensors)
- Gently, gradually improve flexibility if wrist range of motion is limited
- Decrease extreme wrist angle when bearing weight on hands (yoga wedges, Wrist Assured Gloves)
- Support the wrists (Wrist Assured Gloves – Ultra & Fusion styles)



Common Cause #2: Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

"I'm finally getting toned arms, but wonder if I should lay off my strengthening class...I'm worried I'll cause permanent damage!" You have some wrist discomfort and occasional shooting pain while doing planks, push-ups and triceps dips in your strength training class. But a night discomfort turns to constant pain and you wake up with tingling, numb fingers and shooting pain up your arm.

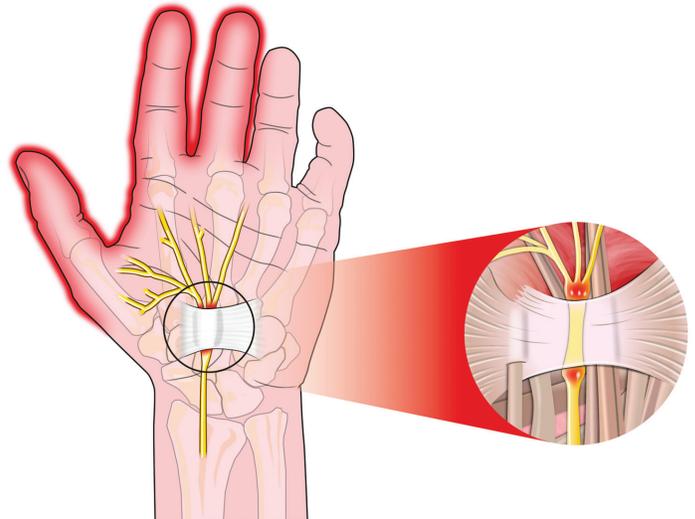
Symptoms of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome:

- Tingling or numbness in your thumb, index and middle fingers (intermittent or constant)
- Pain that radiates up from your wrist to the forearm and shoulder or down into your fingers
- Symptoms may be worse in the AM, especially if wrists are curled (flexed) during sleep
- Noticeable weakness in your hands, dropping items or being unable to open jars etc
- Permanent nerve damage and muscle weakness if CTS is severe and left untreated

What Causes It:

Pressure on the median nerve due to reduced space in the carpal tunnel.

- Injury to the wrist that causes swelling
- Conditions that cause inflammation or fluid retention (RA, diabetes, thyroid problems, pregnancy, menopause)
- Repetitive or forceful use of hands with constant flexing and extending of the tendons such as in hand intensive occupations or hobbies
- Physical anatomy such as a naturally narrow tunnel
- Your sex – females have 3 X greater risk than males



Non Surgical Management:

- Alter activity to reduce repetitive motion
- Avoid direct pressure to wrist and carpal tunnel
- Cold packs (bag of frozen peas) over palm side of wrist to Reduce Swelling
- Muscle / trigger point / body work to reduce tension - look beyond the wrist
- Awareness of posture / breathing / holding patterns / relaxation techniques
- Specific stretches for the neck, shoulders, arms and hands
- Wrist splinting (especially at night if you curl / flex your wrists)
- Anti-inflammatory medications or Corticosteroid injection (as prescribed by MD)
- Other alternative: myofascial release, acupuncture, chiropractic

Prevention:

- Relax grip and tension in hands. Take breaks to shake out hands and rotate wrists in circles
- Reduce tension and improve flexibility in neck, shoulders and arms through yoga or regular stretching
- Avoid forces on hands and carpal tunnel area (don't rest wrists on edge of desk, nothing tight around wrist)
- Be aware of form in exercise. Avoid extreme extension of wrists in weight lifting and weight bearing
- Use of Wrist Assured Gloves with wedged gel pad and V cut-out to protect wrists & carpal tunnel



Common Cause #3: Arthritis in your Wrist or Basal Thumb Joint

“If I can’t support myself on my hands how can advance my Pilates reformer workouts?” You enjoy your Pilates reformer class, until you get to the long stretch series. The pain and stiffness in your wrist, especially at the base of the thumb prevents you from holding yourself steadily on the foot bar. You miss out on benefits of this wonderful series and other exercises that build your arm and core strength.

Symptoms of OsteoArthritis (OA) Wear and Tear Type:

- Deep aching pain in wrist or base of thumb for basal joint (CMC) arthritis
- Increased pain with pinching, writing, grasping or putting pressure on joint
- Joint inflammation and swelling
- Stiffness, especially with cold or damp weather
- Loss of range of motion and grip / pinch strength over time

What Causes OA:

- Genetic factors
- Previous injuries to the joint
- Work related joint stress (impact,vibration)
- Poor posture / joint misalignment
- Repetitive joint movements
- Incidence increases with age

How to Manage It:

- Move and stretch – maintain joint range of motion and lubricate joints
- Water exercise for gentle muscle strengthening



- Yoga / Tai Chi / Pilates
 - creates joint space
 - bring awareness to postural habits / misalignments
 - releases lubricating synovial fluid and nutrients to cartilage
 - stress reduction and muscle relaxation
- Compressive joint wraps and soft supports (keep joints warm and increase circulation)
- Maximum support braces for sports or work
- Adaptive devices (ex: OXO kitchen tools) for activities that cause joint stress
- Thumb splints for hand intensive work & hobbies (i.e. gardening)
- Topical pain relief creams, gels and patches
- Anti-inflammatory, pain meds or cortisone shots as prescribed by MD
- When supporting weight on the hands avoid hard surfaces. Support and cushion thumb & wrist joints with Wrist Assured Gloves

Prevention:

- Maintain ideal weight
- Reduce impact / vibration / trauma to joints
- Good posture / movement patterns / alignment
- Strong toned muscles to support joints
- Use proper body mechanics to reduce joint stress
- Joint protection and alignment supports as needed
- Healthy diet with balanced pH (alkaline anti-inflammatory diet)

Common Cause #4: Weak Muscles and / or Poor Form

"I really want to stick with this boot camp class but it kills my wrists... maybe getting fit isn't for me!" You're committed to getting in shape and love your new boot camp class, but you don't have the upper body strength to do all the exercises. As you fatigue you sink into your wrists and feel all the pressure of your body weight. Ouch!

Signs of Muscle Weakness and / or Compromised Form:

- Muscles fatigue or quiver after a few movement reps or static holds
- Unable to keep wrist stable and straight (neutral) when holding hand weights for arm exercises
- Locking or passively 'hanging out' in joints instead of engaging muscles
- Using momentum and quick jerky movements instead of muscle control.
- Sinking into wrists in plank as shoulders and core 'collapse'
- Hands roll out or in and fingers curl when bearing weight on the hands
- Soft tissue stress and strain resulting in pain (see Tendonitis)

What Causes It:

- Lack of exercise, conditioning, resistance training
- Muscle imbalances due to work, habitual postures and repetitive tasks
- Improper form and technique due to
 - lack of knowledge (new exercise form)
 - lack of instructor feedback & correction
 - lack of body awareness (kinesthetic feedback)
- Ligament laxity / joint hyper mobility can impact form (locking joints, excessive flexibility)
- Tight muscles and reduced flexibility can impact form, alignment and discomfort
- Low muscle tone



How to Manage-Improve It:

- Ease into workouts as strength is built. Use lighter weights, do fewer repetitions and shorter duration holds
- Modify exercises as needed – do planks on knees, etc
- Focus on correct alignment and proper form through education, trainer feedback and visually checking form in the mirror
- Develop your sense of body position in space through mind-body exercise like Tai Chi, yoga & Pilates
- Weight bearing and resistance training provide input to muscles and joints that helps improve body awareness
- Strengthen shoulder, arm, wrist and hand muscles
Balance strength in opposing muscle groups
- Work with a personal trainer or other specialists to build muscle strength, improve posture, form and flexibility
- Use supports or props to decrease joint and muscle strain (Wrist Assured Gloves, yoga wedges, blocks, wrist wraps)
- Be mindful of locking joints. Hold positions with 'micro bend' in joints (i.e. elbows) to engage muscles
- Include isometric strengthening in workout routine
- When weight bearing on hands spread and firmly press fingers down to evenly distribute weight throughout entire hand. Practice lifting out of the wrists



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