

Occupational Therapy Toolkit

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (Median Neuropathy)

Functional Limitations:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure impairment
Impaired hand strength with wasting of the thenar eminence
Pain
Sensory deficits

Assessments:

Phalen's Maneuver - forced flexion at the wrist to 90 degrees for 1 minute.
A positive test will produce numbness and/or burning in the lateral 3.5 digits

Occupational Therapy Intervention:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure training.

Recommend and/or provide adaptive equipment and alternative methods to compensate for weak grasp and pinch (tie one's shoes, button shirts, using a key in a lock, holding cane or walker, writing)

Instruct in proper posture during ADL tasks

Provide UE therapeutic activities and exercises

Hand and wrist stretching, tendon and nerve gliding exercises, progress to hand and wrist strengthening exercises once symptoms are relieved

Provide a wrist splint 15-20' of extension, worn at night

Instruct in joint protection techniques (avoid repetitive hand motion, perform activities with wrist in neutral, modify activities that cause symptoms)

Instruct in pain management techniques

Instruct in coordinating medication peak with exercise and activity, educate in use of superficial heat and cold. Instruct in edema control techniques

Patient Education:

1. Home Exercise Program Face Sheet
2. Tendon Gliding Exercises
3. Nerve Gliding Exercises
4. Forearm & Wrist Active ROM Exercises
5. Forearm & Wrist Strengthening Exercises
6. Forearm & Wrist Stretching Exercises
7. Hand Strengthening Exercises
8. Superficial Heat
9. Superficial Cold
10. Edema Control Techniques
11. Splint Instructions