

# Reduce the Risk of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) affects many types of healthcare workers, including physicians, other clinicians, and support staff, and it is associated with lengthy absences from work. The literature indicates that in combination with a healthy lifestyle, the following strategies and exercises may prevent or slow the development of CTS.<sup>1,2</sup>

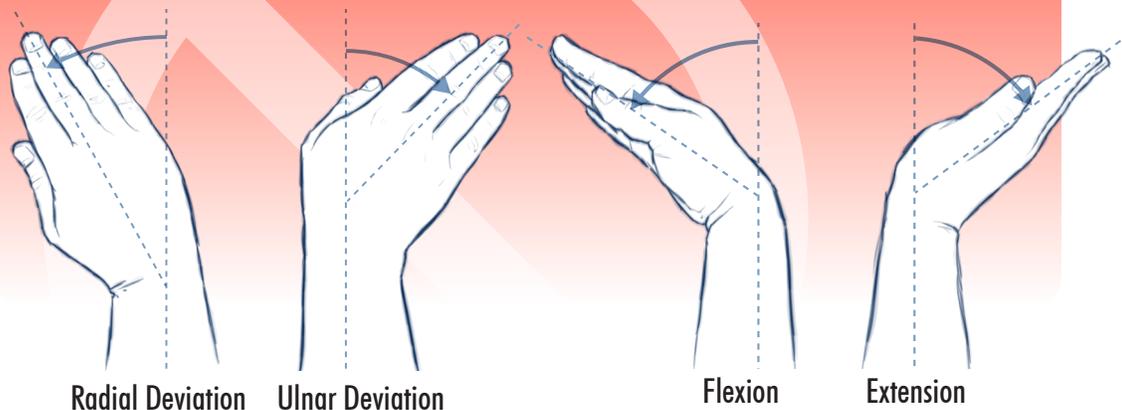
## DO

Maintain a “neutral” (straight) position of the hand and wrist in relation to the forearm whenever possible.<sup>4</sup>



## AVOID

Extreme and/or awkward wrist positions, especially for prolonged periods of time and in combination with high force!<sup>1</sup>



- ▶ Take frequent rest breaks when performing physically taxing or repetitive motions.<sup>3</sup>
- ▶ Alternate tasks and change hands when possible.<sup>4</sup>
- ▶ Perform the following or similar exercises for a few minutes each hour throughout the workday.<sup>5</sup>

### Carpal Tunnel Stretch<sup>4</sup>



Turn the palm upward and hold it while slowly extending the elbow straight. Hold 10 to 15 seconds. Change hands.

### Wrist Rotation<sup>3</sup>



Rotate your wrist 10 times clockwise, then 10 times counterclockwise. Change hands.

### Hand and Finger Stretch<sup>6</sup>



Make a fist, then extend the fingers as far apart as possible. Hold for 10 seconds, then relax. Repeat 5 to 10 times until fingers feel relaxed. Change hands.

<sup>1</sup> Capone AC, Parikh PM, Gatti ME, et al. Occupational injury in plastic surgeons. *Plast Reconstr Surg* 2010 May;125(5):1555-61. PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20440174>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work, 2012 [news release online]. 2013 Nov 26 [cited 2014 Jan 22]. <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/osh2.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Mayo Clinic. Carpal tunnel syndrome [online]. [cited 2014 Jan 16]. <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/carpal-tunnel-syndrome/DS00326/METHOD=print>

<sup>4</sup> Valachi B. Musculoskeletal health of the woman dentist: distinctive interventions for a growing population. *J Calif Dent Assoc* 2008 Feb;36(2):127-32. PubMed: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18411975>

<sup>5</sup> University of Maryland Medical Center. Carpal tunnel syndrome [online]. [cited 2014 Jan 16]. <http://umm.edu/health/medical/reports/articles/carpal-tunnel-syndrome>

<sup>6</sup> Texas State Office of Risk Management. Repetitive trauma injuries [online]. [cited 2014 Jan 16].

<http://www.sorm.state.tx.us/rmtsa-introduction/rmtsa-volume-three-table-of-contents-2/subchapter-7-20/subchapter-7-19-repetitive-trauma-injuries>