



## Open Carpal Tunnel Release Post-op Protocol

### Important Instructions Following Surgery:

- After surgery, your wrist and hand will be in a bulky dressing with a small splint. Please DO NOT remove this until Post -op Day 3. Try to keep your bandage clean and dry.
- To minimize swelling, you must keep your hand lifted up to your shoulder level.
- When sitting or lying, you should use pillows to support your surgically affected extremity, especially when sleeping.
- Encouragement for finger movement to avoid stiffness and to help with swelling reduction. A pulling sensation may be noted, but this is normal.
- No lifting more than 4 pounds for 3 weeks followed by no lifting more than 8 pounds for 3 weeks.
- GOALS:
  - Restore wrist, finger, thumb range of motion.
  - Promote optimal tissue healing environment and decrease inflammation.
  - Promote optimal nerve healing and regeneration.
  - Restore upper extremity strength and function.
  
- **Surgery to Week 1:**
  - Active range of motion of your fingers and thumb while in the dressing and splint. Post-op day 3, remove your post operative dressings and apply a Band-Aid. Leave the steri-strips intact. OK to shower and get surgical site wet, no baths or soaks. Let water roll off gently and pat dry. Your incision is closed with absorbable suture and skin glue, no sutures are needed to be removed.
  
- **Weeks 2-3:**
  - Return to the clinic at the end of week two (post -op day 14) to have a clinical assessment. Follow-up is as needed thereafter.
  - A therapy visit can be scheduled if necessary to review the following exercises:  
Tendon Gliding Activities: Six Pack exercises with the wrist neutral.
    - Full fist (MP, PIP and DIP flexion).
    - Flat fist (MP and PIP flexion with DIP extension).
    - Claw (MP extension with PIP and DIP flexion).
    - Finger abduction/adduction.
    - Table top (MP flexion with DIP and PIP extension).
    - Thumb Opposition
  
- **3 weeks +:**
  - Continue with progressive hand range of motion exercises.
  - You may begin strengthening with a soft ball, TheraPutty and low weights. You may conduct activities as tolerated.