

MONTANA COALITION FOR EMPLOYEE FUNCTIONALITY SAFETY & HEALTH
CTS SAFETY CHECKLIST[®]

Prevention of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

What: A CTS Safety Checklist to prevent carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) at work and at home.

Why: Repetitive stress and cumulative trauma on the hand and wrist or improper positioning of the hand will result in CTS and decreased functions and performance of the hand.

When: This Checklist should be completed periodically at work and at home to assess potential risks for CTS.

How: Check the boxes and follow the recommendations below.

At Work

- If your workplace offers ergonomic or human factors evaluation for work areas, consult with your safety officer to have an evaluation of your complete work area.
- If your workplace offers CTS screening tests, such as the **FAsTSM System**, schedule a test immediately to set up a baseline for your hand functionality that can be compared with your hand functionality over time.
- Check desk, chair, workbench, and computer screen and keyboard for appropriate height for you. Computer screen and typing materials should be placed about eye level to reduce neck strain.
- Always maintain a straight hand-wrist alignment when typing on a keyboard or typewriter; try to move only the fingers, not the wrist or elbow.
- Avoid awkward bending, turning, or twisting of the hand and wrist.
- Always keep good posture with your back against back support of chair, shoulders relaxed, elbows at the sides of your body, wrists straight, and feet flat on the floor.
- Always use the resting pad on the computer keyboard or laptop computer during breaks from typing.
- Install a wrist support pad along the closest edge of the desk or sliding keyboard shelf to you.
- Check hand tools for problems, such as bad grip, too much vibration, and sharp edges or ridges that cut circulation in the hand or press on a nerve. Contact supervisor and safety officer immediately if you have a problem.
- Check hand tools for comfort, balance, and safety, especially if you are left-handed. If possible, ask for left-handed tools or tools that can be used by left- and righted-handed workers.
- If workplace is too cold for your hands, wear proper safety gloves to keep hands warm or contact your supervisor.
- Take more rest breaks, if possible.
- Do exercises during rest breaks and throughout the work day. See exercises on the back page.

At Home

- Limit your activities that involve repetitive motion, such as sewing, needlepoint, knitting, and computer games, and playing cards.
 - Limit your time with the use of home power tools that cause vibration.
 - Check all hand tools for problems (as mentioned above). Replace them with proper ones.
 - Check computer keyboard and screen for proper height for you. Screen should be eye level.
 - Take frequent rest breaks.
 - Do exercises during rest breaks and throughout the day. See exercises on the back page.
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Note: For more information about CTS screening, the **FAsTSM System**, and the nearest testing centers, visit www.communityofcompetence.com and www.KaDaMedical.com. The signs and symptoms of CTS usually include pain, numbness, tingling in the thumb, index, middle, and ring fingers. There are treatments and therapies for CTS, as well as medical and safety products to prevent CTS. Consult with your doctor immediately if you any of these signs and symptoms.

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Recommended Exercises

Fist Extension Exercises

straight

hook

The tendons in the wrist need to glide freely as the wrist and the fingers move. These are three exercises to help the tendons in the wrist glide more easily.

straight fist

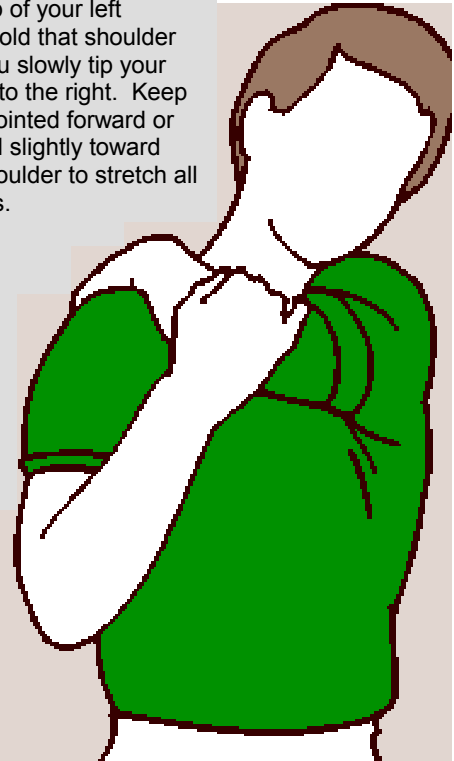
full fist

Start with the fingers in the straight position and then move the fingers into the hook position. Hold this position for 5 seconds, then relax. Repeat 4 more times. Repeat the same series for the straight fist and the full fist positions.

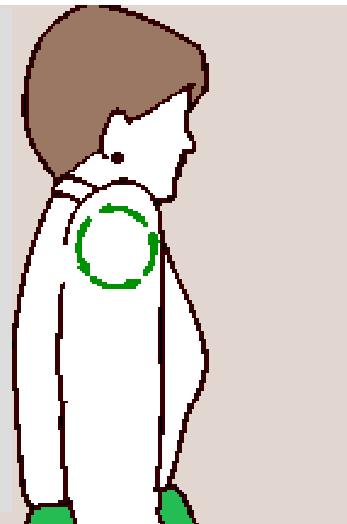
Make a loose fist, then release, fanning out fingers. Repeat 5 times.

Sit upright. Place your right hand on top of your left shoulder. Hold that shoulder down as you slowly tip your head away to the right. Keep your face pointed forward or even turned slightly toward the right shoulder to stretch all the muscles.

Hold this stretch gently for 5 seconds. Do this once for each side.



Stand in a relaxed position with arms at your side. Shrug your shoulders up, then squeeze your shoulders back, then stretch your shoulders down, then press them forward. Count to 7 as you complete one rotation of your shoulders. Repeat 4 times.



Source: The American Physical Therapy Association (www.apta.org)

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