

# Carpal Tunnel Decompression

## The Procedure

Day surgery, either under local anaesthetic or a short general anaesthetic depending on patient preference.

The “roof” of the carpal tunnel is released through a short incision, taking pressure off the contents of the carpal tunnel, specifically the median nerve.

The wound is sutured with 4 or 5 stitches.

A padded bandage is applied.

The fingers often feel a bit numb for several hours from local anaesthetic.

## Following Surgery

Keep the hand elevated and use the sling when up and about over the first 2 days.

The padded bandage can be removed 4 days following surgery, leaving the surgical mifix tape over the wound in place.

Keep the fingers moving and use the hand gently.

The sutures are removed approximately 11 days post op. The wound is thick, bumpy and tender initially but gradually softens and fades.

The first symptom to improve is often night numbness. Gradually day time symptoms, comfort and strength improve over many months.

## Risks

The general risks of surgery apply, including wound problems, nerve injury and pain reactions. Complications are uncommon.

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## Return to Work Guidelines

**Sedentary and light work:** 5 – 10 days from surgery. Similar time frames for driving.

Medium gripping by 6 weeks from surgery, gradually building up.