

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Bodywork Treatment Proves Successful

Cathy Ulrich

It started as a vague feeling of numbness in her thumb and first two fingers, then progressed slowly to a definite tingling that woke her several nights a week. "It's not so bad on weekends when I have a chance to rest my arms, but it's now getting in the way of things I like to do at home," says Marie, who spends long hours during the work week typing at her computer keyboard. "I love to knit and cook, and I've had to curb these activities, as well."

Diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome, Marie displayed the classic symptoms: soreness in her forearms, pain in her hands at the end of a long day at the computer, and a feeling of tightness that had spread from hands and wrists all the

the same way many times a day over a long period of time, she has literally worn out the tissues involved in that motion. This type of injury -- called a repetitive strain injury, or RSI -- creates tiny tears in the fibers of the soft tissues of the body. While they don't immediately cause loss of function, these micro-tears set up conditions for chronic inflammation that will eventually manifest as pain, soreness, tightness, tingling, and burning.

CTS

The hand and wrist combination work together as an amazing, mechanical anatomical wonder. Imagine a set of ropes and pulleys that travel from the

Courage is like a muscle. We strengthen it by use.

-Ruth Gordon



Working at a computer keyboard for long hours each day can bring on carpal tunnel syndrome.

way to her elbows. And recently, she'd been getting headaches.

Marie has a couple of different options for treating the problem. "My doctor tells me he can operate, but the surgery isn't always successful," she says. "He recommends I try bodywork first."

Because Marie does the same motion in

elbow through the wrist to the finger tips. The muscles reside in the forearm, moving the fingers via long tendons that run through channels in the wrist. The nerves that send and receive sensory and motor information from the brain run alongside the tendons through these same channels.

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Office Hours and Contact

Ohana Therapeutic Massage
218-263-1501
Spring Hours
Mon. thru Thurs. 9am-6pm
Friday 9am-2pm
Saturday 4/7 and 4/21 9am-1pm

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When bending or straightening a finger, these tendons slide back and forth, just like cables. When continually working at a keyboard and using the same motion in the same position thousands of times a day -- like millions of Americans do -- the cables begin to wear. And just like threads in a rope, some of the collagen fibers will tear. This process progresses until enough fibers are torn that the body develops inflammation in the tendons and sheaths. Swelling ensues, which pinches the nerves, producing the classic symptoms of tingling, swelling, and even loss of grip strength.

The Bigger Picture

The symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome may reveal an even bigger problem. The nerves that carry sensory and motor information to the hand arise from the spinal cord in the neck, travel under the collar bone, through the armpit and elbow, all the way to the wrist. A nerve can become entrapped at the neck, shoulder, elbow, or wrist, and an impingement in any of these places can have a cumulative effect on the tingling felt in the hands. These entrapments are usually caused by poor postural habits. The soft tissues become shortened around habitual positions of rounded shoulders and forward head from working long hours at the computer and the channels where the nerves travel through the shoulders and arms can close down. Sound familiar?

Can Bodywork Help?

A recent study conducted at The Touch Research Institute at the University of Miami School of Medicine looked at the efficacy of bodywork in treating carpal tunnel syndrome. Researchers found that after the completion of four massage sessions, the participants experienced an improvement in grip strength and a decrease in pain, anxiety, and depression. Participants also showed improvement in specific medical tests used to diagnose carpal tunnel syndrome.

This landmark study verifies what bodyworkers have observed clinically for years: Massage -- and especially deep tissue techniques, such as neuromuscular therapy, Rolfing, and Hellerwork -- can reorganize the connective tissue fibers, break up scar tissue, and reduce or eliminate the cause

of inflammation. Soft tissue work helps realign these tiny fibers of the tendons and sheaths, and the body can then heal itself -- and ease or even eliminate carpal tunnel syndrome.

Bodywork to the entire arm, shoulder, and neck will also free soft tissues where hidden tightness can contribute to the problem. Soft tissue inflammation can travel through the continuous connective tissue framework from fingertips to head and even cause headaches -- as was the case with Marie. Massage can restore these tissues to normal function.

Other Considerations

In addition to bodywork, it's important to evaluate postural habits, work station positioning, and movement patterns. When workers become so focused on their work that they forget their bodies, they tend to maintain positions that

contribute to the cause. It's important to identify several ways and several positions to accomplish the same thing. Moving the mouse from one side to the other, even during the same day, can help prevent fatigue and tissue failure. Wrist rests and keyboard trays are important, and a regular stretching routine is essential.

Finally, along with exercise and good nutrition, include bodywork as part of your regular health maintenance program. Regular massage reduces connective tissue inflammation and prevents scar tissue from forming. Movement education, such as the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais Method, structural integration, and Trager Approach can help correct postural issues that also contribute to the problem. Bodywork is a treatment of choice to keep carpal tunnel syndrome from slowing you down.



Massage and bodywork can help mitigate the symptoms of repetitive stress injuries, like CTS.

Are Your Candles Safe?

How to Choose Toxin-free Flames

Glynnis Osher

There is nothing like the inviting glow of a candle to make us feel relaxed, guide us into a meditative state, or harmonize the ambiance of a room. With all these life-enhancing attributes, it is troubling to think that many candles are toxic and doing more harm than good--but that may be the case.

The Problem

Most candles today are made from paraffin wax, a petroleum by-product that emits toxic fumes and soot into the air. There are up to eleven known carcinogenic compounds in paraffin candles that are considered toxic air agents by the state of California. Burning these candles can cause harm to the heart, lungs, circulatory, and nervous systems, especially a concern for young children, the elderly, and those with asthma or other already established respiratory problems. In addition, the burning of the fragrant oils in scented candles can create significant air pollution, as well.

Another possible hazard: wicks. While U.S. candle makers voluntarily agreed 25 years ago to prohibit lead wicks, some imported candles may still contain lead. Ensure you're burning cotton wicks only.

The Solution

The good news is, you can still enjoy burning candles because there are safe and healthy alternatives. Conscious candle choices include beeswax and the increasingly popular soy wax. Unlike petroleum, soy is a sustainable and renewable resource. Soy wax is a vegetable by-product that is biodegradable and nontoxic. Many candle enthusiasts prefer soy candles because they burn clean and release very little or no soot into the air. Also, because soy wax is water soluble, clean up is easy and containers can be easily washed and reused. Another benefit of soy wax is the cooler burning temperature, making for a much longer burning candle.

For more information visit the website www.themysticmasala.com.



Candles are for relaxation, not toxification.

Hemp Nutrition

Set Aside Stereotypes For This Wonder Food

Shelley Burns, N.D.

While hemp has often been negatively associated with marijuana, it actually has very little mind-altering tetrahydro-cannabinol (THC) in it--just 0.3 percent in hemp, compared with the 3-15 percent found in marijuana. And in parts of the world, it has been used to make clothing, bedding, and rope thousands of years.

Now more recently, hemp and its good balance of antioxidants, carbohydrates, fats, and proteins is being viewed as a health-promoting, disease-preventing food. Its derivatives include hemp oil, hemp butter, hemp protein powder, and newest of all, hemp milk. Hemp milk is positioned to compete with other non-dairy alternatives like soy, rice, and almond milk.

HEMP'S POWERFUL PROPERTIES PROVIDE A

NUMBER OF BENEFITS:

- Its antioxidant content counteracts environmental toxins.
- Its carbohydrates help increase energy, improve endurance performance during exercise, and keep the mind at peak performance.
- Hemp seeds have more dietary protein than soybeans, meat, fish, chicken, cheese, and milk. Hemp protein has the added benefit of being gluten-free.
- Hemp contains all nine essential amino acids, the building blocks of cells, antibodies, muscle tissue, and enzymes.
- Hemp is loaded with essential fatty acids (EFAs), which are required for maintaining good neurological,

digestive, and skin health.

- Hemp has a low-cholesterol content and a high content in natural phytosterols that also reduce cholesterol levels.
- Hemp is helpful in preventing conditions such as Alzheimer's disease, arthritis, and asthma.
- Hemp is also good for the planet. As a low-maintenance plant that grows just about anywhere, needs little or no pesticides, and is an ideal crop for organic, sustainable farming.

*I think
self-awareness
is probably the
most important
thing toward
being a
champion.*

-Billie Jean Kinf

As readers of our Newsletter, we like to give you the first peeks of the happenings at Ohana Therapeutic Massage. Check out below for the latest news!

WeGiveBack April Honorees!

This month we are honoring those who dedicate their lives to making a difference in the world - Non-Profit Workers! From April 2nd - 13th, those who work for a Non-Profit organization may qualify to receive a FREE 30 minute massage at Ohana Therapeutic Massage! For more details or to schedule your free 30 minute massage, please call us at 218-263-1501.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Spring has Sprung! Expo

Friday, April 13th - 6pm-9pm

Saturday, April 14th - 9am-6pm

NEW location - Hibbing Memorial Building

Helping you Heal yourself

208 E Howard St
Hibbing, MN 55746



Member, **Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals**