



HAND IN HAND REHABILITATION, OT, PC

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GIVE YOUR HANDS A BREAK WHEN
**RETURNING
TO SCHOOL!**

Ease Your Pain

*What you can do for Carpal
Tunnel pain*

Knit Without Pain!

*Keep doing what you love,
pain-free!*

Healthy Recipe

*Enjoy this delicious healthy
vegetarian recipe!*



GIVE YOUR HANDS A BREAK WHEN RETURNING TO SCHOOL!

TIPS FOR TREATING CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

Do your hands, wrists, or forearms ache on a daily basis, even when completing simple tasks? Are your daily activities, such as typing or writing, harsh on those areas? Do you tend to feel painful stings with arm, hand, or wrist movement? If so, you may be suffering from carpal tunnel syndrome.

Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common condition for students to experience when participating in excessive typing or writing for their classes. It is a condition that can cause numbness, stiffness, or pain that can radiate through your fingers, hands, wrists, or forearms. This happens when too much pressure is put on your median nerve, located at the base of your palm.

Your carpal tunnel is a narrow channel, about the width of your thumb, located on your wrist under the palm. It protects the median nerve, as well as the tendons you use to bend your fingers. When excessive pressure is put on the median nerve, it causes crowding and irritation of the carpal tunnel, making it difficult for it to do its job. This, eventually, is what leads to carpal tunnel syndrome.

Many people will correct this condition with surgery; however, our Certified Hand Therapists (CHTs) have proven to be just as successful (if not more so!) in treating this condition. At Hand In Hand Rehabilitation, we will safely and comfortably treat your carpal tunnel symptoms so you can have a comfortable and successful school year. For more information, call our office today.

What causes carpal tunnel syndrome?

Essentially, any excessive use of the fingers, wrists, hands, or forearms can cause carpal tunnel syndrome. This is why students so frequently experience it, because classroom activities involve constant use of the hands and wrists. It is a very common condition, affecting approximately 1 out of every 20 Americans.

Some health conditions can also lead to carpal tunnel syndrome, such as:

- Previous injury to the wrist, including strains, sprains, dislocations, and fractures.
- Fluid retention, typically during pregnancy.
- Use of medication, typically steroids.
- Hormone or metabolic changes, including thyroid imbalances, pregnancy, and menopause.
- Degenerative and rheumatoid arthritis.
- Diabetes.

How can I tell if I need surgery?

In some severe cases, surgery may be a necessary step in the treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome. However, in most cases, hand therapy alone is enough to treat the condition completely.

(Continued Inside)



HELP FOR CARPAL TUNNEL PAIN

In fact, in a study published by the Journal of Orthopaedic & Sports Physical Therapy, the effects of the two methods of treatment were thoroughly tested. Based on the known side effects and risks associated with surgery, in addition to the knowledge that over 1/3 of patients are unable to return to school or work within 8 weeks after receiving their operation, researchers decided to test whether more conservative treatments could be used in replacement of surgical procedures.

The results were overwhelmingly positive. 100 women with carpal tunnel syndrome were studied; 50 had received surgery, and 50 had received hand therapy. The hand therapy patients were treated with manual therapy techniques, focusing on the median nerve, in addition to stretching exercises given by their therapists.

After one month, these patients had much better function during their daily activities than the surgery patients, and demonstrated stronger grip strength overall. At 3, 6, and 12 months, patients in both groups showed similar improvements with function and grip strength.

What can I do on my own?

Fortunately, there are some precautions you can take to make sure you don't develop carpal tunnel syndrome when you return to school. If you notice pain in your fingers, hands, wrists, or forearms, you can purchase a brace to ease tension while you type and write.

Additional exercises you can do to prevent these areas from becoming stiff and/or provide pain relief include:

- **Spiders doing pushups:** Begin with your hands clasped together in prayer position. Then spread your fingers apart as far as they can go. Next, create a triangle shape by separating your palms, but keeping your fingers together still.

- **Shake it off:** Shake out your hands, as if you have just washed them and you're trying to air dry them.
- **Deep wrist stretch:** Begin with your arm stretched straight in front of you, elbow locked, and fingers pointing downward. Spread your fingers slightly and use your other hand to press down and apply gentle pressure to your wrist and fingers, slowly pushing them as far as they'll go. When you've reached maximum flexibility, hold this position for 20 seconds. When you're finished, repeat with your other hand.

Hand In Hand Rehabilitation is dedicated toward helping you achieve a pain-free life, with the least amount of discomfort possible. If you have been noticing pain in your upper extremities from schoolwork, the best decision is to contact us as soon as possible to set up a consultation with one of our CHTs. Contact us today to find out how we can relieve your carpal tunnel pains!



To learn more, call us at:
516.333.1481 (Long Island)
212.472.1000 (Manhattan)
or visit our website at:
HandInHandRehabilitation.com

KNITTING WITHOUT PAIN!



Knitting is a favorite hobby for many Americans, one that takes a combination of practice and determination to get beyond the initial learning curve. But did you know it also has some added health benefits? For example, it is proven to boost self-esteem, lower heart rate, lower blood pressure, and reduce cortisol levels (stress hormone)? It's true! But this relaxing activity can also make aging or injured hands hurt. This seems to apply to almost all hobbies, doesn't it? So, what should we do, just give up? No! There is always a way to modify our activities and hobbies so that we can live our lives to the fullest.

If you are an avid knitter, try some of the following techniques to help with upper extremity pain (many of these can be applied to any type of repetitive activities):

- Take frequent breaks: Doing anything for hours on end will make you sore. Cut hobby time into smaller more frequent chunks of time vs. long marathon sessions.
- Use the best posture possible for the task: Back straight, shoulders down and back, use pillows to support your arms as needed and to support your work so that you don't have to look down so much.
- Drink a lot of water: being hydrated helps all of our tissues feel better with use.
- Change your knitting method: Continental or Portuguese knitting methods have been shown to require less movement of the hands and shoulders, thus decreasing some of the stress. Look these methods up online – there are tons of videos!
- Change your equipment: Using wooden or square knitting needles can help decrease the strength you need to hold on to your project by making them easier to grip. When you can pick projects that use larger diameter needles. Also, use the shortest needles possible to decrease the weight placed on your hands once the project gets bigger (or instead of short needles use interchangeable cable needles so that the cable can distribute the weight).

GET THE HELP YOU NEED TODAY!



1. Call **516.333.1481** (Long Island) or **212.472.1000** (Manhattan) to talk with your occupational therapist and discuss your pain and symptoms.



2. Your occupational therapist may suggest exercises or precautionary measures to relieve or avoid pain.



3. If further assessment is needed to find the cause of your pain, your therapist can schedule an appointment with you.



VEGETARIAN QUINOA-STUFFED PEPPERS

Ingredients

- 6 medium red, orange and/or yellow bell peppers
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped (about 2 cups)
- 1 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon chili powder
- 2 tsp. minced chipotle chiles
- 1 Tbsp. adobo sauce from can
- 2 cups cooked tri-color quinoa
- 1 (15 ounce) can black beans, rinsed
- 1 (14.5 ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1 c. frozen corn
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1½ c. shredded pepper Jack cheese

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Cut off stem end of each bell pepper. Chop the pepper tops to yield 1 cup. Remove and discard seeds and membranes from peppers. Bring about 1 inch of water to a boil in a large saucepan fitted with a steamer basket. Add the peppers; cover and steam until starting to soften, about 3 minutes. Remove the peppers and set aside.

Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and the chopped pepper tops; cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in garlic, cumin, chili powder, chipotles and adobo; cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and add quinoa, black beans, tomatoes, corn and salt; fold until well combined.

Stand the peppers upright in an 11-by-7-inch baking dish. (Trim the bottoms, if necessary, to keep the peppers upright.) Spoon about 1 cup quinoa mixture into each pepper, packing it in tightly. Cover the stuffed peppers with foil.

Bake the peppers until warmed through, about 10 minutes. Remove the foil and sprinkle the peppers evenly with cheese. Bake, uncovered, until the cheese melts and browns slightly, 5 to 8 minutes. Let rest for 5 minutes before serving.