

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine are effective in relieving the pain and symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. Repetitive activities at work or at home, especially with the wrist flexed, can lead to carpal tunnel syndrome. Other factors associated with the development of this disease besides repetitive movements are diabetes mellitus, rheumatoid arthritis, and thyroid disease.

Carpal tunnel syndrome begins with the inability to manipulate objects, tingling in the hands, and wrist pain. As the disease progresses, lack of coordination turns into severe, debilitating weakness and surgery might be considered or even necessary. In 1994, in the U.S. alone, 849,000 initial visits were made to physicians in office-based practices because of carpal tunnel syndrome. This condition affects as many as 15% of workers in high-risk industries, such as electronic parts assemblers, musicians, keyboarders, and dental hygienists. Furthermore, almost half of the carpal tunnel release operations performed every year are work-related.

Treatment Principles

Acupuncture can help you avoid pain medication and surgery by inserting thin needles at various points according to the channels in the body that are affected.

Treatment based on pattern discrimination:

Blood Vacuity not Nourishing the Sinew channels & Vessels Pattern – main symptoms include tingling and/or numbness of the fingers of one or both hands, night-blindness, dizziness, heart palpitations, and a fine pulse

Qi Stagnation & Blood Stasis Pattern – main symptom is wrist pain that is relatively severe, fixed in location, and is worse at night

Wind Damp Impediment Pattern – main symptoms include wrist pain that comes and goes or migrates up the arm, numbness and heaviness in the hand and fingers, worse pain after exposure to damp, cold, or rainy weather

Some acupuncture techniques for treatment of carpal tunnel syndrome include:

- ◆ Distal Point Therapy – allows mobilization and manual therapy to be performed at the same time and is performed away from the point of injury or pain
- ◆ Local Point Therapy – stimulates a point near the affected area for a short period of time and may prevent flare-up
- ◆ Chinese Herbal Medicine – various Chinese Medicines used either topically or taken orally to regulate and ease wrist pain

Results of Acupuncture Treatment

Acupuncture treatments can reduce pain and stiffness, increase range of motion, and help post-surgery recovery.

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