

## Carpal Tunnel Release Surgery

In carpal tunnel syndrome, median nerve is compressed in the palm. The idea of “decompression” is to relieve the pressure on the nerve so that it might start working normally again.

### Before Surgery

You will be seen by Mr Shah before the operation. He will confirm the correct side and will take this opportunity to draw on your hand (mark with a marking pen). This is to ensure the correct hand is operated on. If you have any questions, now may be the time to ask them.

### During Surgery

Once in the operating theatre, you will lie down with your arm stretched out, resting on a smaller table. A tight inflatable band (tourniquet) may be placed across your upper arm. This is to limit the amount of bleeding. It may be uncomfortable but should only be on for around 10 minutes. Mr Shah does not use tourniquet in most cases.

The skin of your hand and wrist will be cleaned with antiseptic solution and the area numbed by injecting local anaesthetic. This will sting and may hurt for a very short time – but the hand will become numb and pain-free very soon after. This is the most painful part of procedure.

A 5 cm long incision is made through the skin just past your wrist. Ligament compressing the Median nerve is found and released. The skin will then be closed by dissolvable stitches, which usually falls off after 2 weeks when you will be reviewed for a wound check.

### After Surgery

It is really important you ELEVATE (keep up) your arm to limit the swelling and pain. You can start moving your fingers straight after the surgery. You can reduce your bandages after 2 days, but the plaster over the wound should stay for 2 weeks. If it falls off, replace. Keep the hand clean and dry.

If a surgical glue is used then you can have shower, wash your hand and even put soap on your wound after 2 days. However you need to avoid bath, swimming pool etc for 3 weeks.

You should avoid heavy use of the hand, but light activities may be started after a few days. The scar can be painful and swollen for several months. Massage with moisturising creams such as E45 will help with this, usually 3 weeks after the operation provided your wound is fully healed.

The success rate of carpal tunnel decompression varies, but is usually greater than 85%. In most cases patients’ pins and needle and pain returns to normal – but it may be months before the sensation, numbness and power returns to the fingers and may even be incomplete.

<b>Type of Operation</b>	Day Case	
<b>Procedure Length</b>	15 minutes	
<b>Anaesthesia</b>	Local Anaesthesia	
<b>Time of Work</b>	Light desk job	Few days
	Heavy job	4-6 weeks
<b>Driving</b>	Usually within a week	