

# Wrist Tendonitis

Not all hand numbness and not all wrist pain can be labeled Carpal Tunnel Syndrome - but that is unfortunately what happens many times either by non-specialized health personnel or by people who self-diagnose their own symptoms.

Actually, the most common wrist pain, with or without numbness, is a tendonitis of the wrist and forearm. The "-itis" means inflammation so the pain is due to an inflamed tendon in the wrist and forearm; swelling on the back side of the wrist is also a common finding, as are tight and very tender muscle fibers just below the elbow on the side of the forearm of the affected wrist.

Wrist tendonitis is caused by repetitive and overuse of the hands while performing manual activities at home or at work.

Home treatment can include the use of ice and massage and using wrist supports or forearm band-type bracing as in Tennis elbow.

Here is a 2-3 week daily home care:

a) ICE: place ice over the swollen part of the wrist (that pad or thickness on the back side of the wrist that looks like a fat pad) and keep the ice there for 15 minutes.

b) MASSAGE: while the ice is on the wrist, put a little lotion on the upper side of the forearm, just below the elbow and feel for a tight, lumpy and very sore muscle bundle. Generously and slowly massage this muscle spasm up and down and across the length of this small but hard muscle and also massage against the grain (cross-fiber) as well for 5-10 minutes.

c) ICE: after the 15 minutes, move the ice from the wrist to the muscle that was just massaged and leave there for another 15 minutes.

Using heat or any herbal patches that make the skin feel warm or hot will not be helpful, if not harmful. The inflammation needs to calm down and these may add to the "-itis" and end up slowing down recovery. Only use ice and not heat for a tendonitis.

If there are any questions, you can ask a physical therapist or a chiropractor for what might apply in your particular situation.

