

Ouch My Aching Wrists: No More Keyboarding Or Golf

You may have heard either experienced computer users or serious golfers lamenting that Carpal Tunnel Syndrome has affected them big time. Just what is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and how can I prevent it from affecting my computer keyboarding and golf activities.

The hand to keyboard relationship is the most strained interface between you and your computer. Typing can be more than a bothersome task. Typing can cause permanent damage to your hands and wrists. It has been found that approximately 60 of keyboard operators can be found to have recurring symptoms of keyboard related injury. Damage to wrist and hand function can be so severe that in approximately 10 of those affected have had to contact health care professionals - be it Physiotherapist, chiropractor, medical gp or orthopedic medical specialist.

The most serious of the health problems associated with keyboard use is the same ailment suffered by chicken pickers and meat packers. The formal medical name for this ailment is Repetitive Strain injury (RSI). The name explains the cause. Straining to perform the same hand movements over and over again and again eventually leads to physical wrist and / or hand damage. The most common manifestation of RSI among computer keyboard users is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS). In addition a similar ailment ? wrist tendonitis has also been associated with extensive regular keyboard use.

The carpal tunnel is a narrow passageway in your wrist through your median nerves: it carries sensations for your entire hand. As well the median nerve affects the finger flexor tendons, which link your fingers to the muscles in your lower arm. The tunnel is formed by walls of solid bone on three sides with the bottom enclosed by the transverse carpal ligament, a tough inelastic cartilage.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome occurs when the tendons protect themselves from overuse. Each tendon is surrounded by a thick, fluid filled sac called a synovial sheath, which swells with extra fluid to protect the tendon. Scientifically, this swelling called tendonitis. When these sacs swell in the carpal tunnel, they can pinch the median nerve against the bones of the carpal ligament. This can result in the loss of sensation in the hand and debilitating pain.

Although the problem develops over a period of years, the onset of pain caused by Carpal Tunnel Syndrome, the onset of pain is often sudden. Some sufferers have no symptoms at night and wake up the next morning with excruciating pain. Often these people with carpal tunnel syndrome are unable to work for months. And it is not only the computer skills that suffer.

It is not as if these people can lead normal lives. Other enjoyments such as the game and sport of golf may not be possible to be played. In most cases those afflicted with carpal tunnel syndrome have ignored all the pain warning signs: a minor pain in the wrist after a day of typing or some numbness in the thumb or fingers.

People have been typing for over 100 years, yet Carpal Tunnel Syndrome appears to be a recent phenomenon. The diagnosis is not new, and the condition is not caused by a recently evolved virus or bacterium. People's typing habits have actually changed.

Today, a computer user's fingers stay as close to the home row on the keyboard as possible, a simple press of the pinkie is all that is needed to issue a carriage return. Old typewriters required a definite change of the position and a resounding right hook to send the carriage back to the left after each page, and the end of the page, the typist had to extract one sheet and roll a new one in the typewriter. All of these simple necessary acts added variation to the typing process. Computers encourage extended use, resulting in hour upon hour of entering and editing text and data.

These difference between classic typing and modern keyboarding hint at one way of avoiding Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: What can you do to prevent Carpal Tunnel Syndrome or reduce your symptoms?

First you may wish to replace your keyboard with an ergonomic friendly model. Avoid the following hand and wrist postures ? ulnar deviation where the wrist is bent outwards in the direction of the little finger, abduction ? where

the hands and arms are angled together in front of the body rather than at shoulder width. Avoid flexion which is the anatomical term where the wrist is bent down in such a manner where the fingers are lower than the wrist joint. Extension of the wrists and hands where the wrist is bent up and back so that the fingers are higher than the wrist joint. Finally pronation is a bad idea. Pronation refers to the anatomical term describing a forearm and hand position in which the hand is open, palm down and parallel with the flat surface of the desk or floor.

If you are involved with computer keyboard tasks for very long period of times of time here are several tips to spare your keyboarding and golfing abilities and skill levels. Try to keep your wrists straight while typing. Adjust your chair so that as you type, your elbows are at the same height as your wrists. A proper computer desk which lies at the proper height rather than an old office desk that you just happened to have lying around is an excellent idea. As well spring on a proper, adjustable ergonomically designed chair. Be sure that you rest your wrists often.

Lastly and most importantly take frequent rests and relaxation periods along your conquests.

It may be important to be on par with the other players in your office. However it is false economy at the end of the game if both your keyboarding skills and golf game on the fairway suffers.

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