



HANDS DOWN: YOGA CAN EASE THE PAIN OF CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME

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Attention Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Sufferers. You've tried pricey drugs and equipment. You may have even had surgery to ease your beleaguered hands and wrists. Yet, you are still suffering the effects of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome.

Have you considered yoga?

According to a recent study done by the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, a simple yoga program can alleviate the pain of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and improve hand strength. And it was proven to be more effective than any drugs, equipment or surgery.

But what is Carpal Tunnel Syndrome? Repetitive motions, like typing, can cause Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. These repetitive motions cause pressure on the median nerve. The median nerve controls sensations in your thumb, index finger, and middle fingers. In extreme cases, Carpal Tunnel Syndrome can be so unbearably painful the some sufferers can no longer use their affected hands.

However, yoga can help sufferers of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome and you don't have to be flexible as a licorice stick to do the basic postures.

The study at the University of Pennsylvania Medical School divided Carpal Tunnel Syndrome sufferers into two controlled

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groups. One group used wrist splints. The other group did a 15-week yoga class twice a week.

The yoga group practiced simple yoga postures. These postures not only exercised their hands and wrists; they also exercised the entire upper body including arms and shoulders.

After eight weeks, the yoga group reported having less pain from Carpal Tunnel Syndrome. They also reported greater hand strength. However, the group wearing the wrist splints didn't report less pain or any greater hand strength.

The following are the postures used in the program:

Staff Pose (dandasana)-Sit upright on a chair and press hands into the chair. Press your shoulder blades into your back and move your shoulders up and down.

Prayer Position-Press your palms and fingers together. Now stretch and bend your fingers.

Arms Overhead (urdhva hastasana)-Lift your arms over your head. Keep your arms straight and shoulders down.

Arms Overhead with fingers interlocked (parvatasana)-Do the same as Arms Overhead, but this time clasp your fingers and turn your palms upward.

Chair Twist-Sit sideways on a chair with your right side against the back of the chair. Now place your hands on the back of the chair twisting to the right. Use your hands to support yourself. Now do this on the left side.

Mountain (tadasana)-Stand tall and straight as you can.

90-degree Forward Bend to the Wall-Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Now raise your arms over your head. Bend at your hips and bring your hands to rest on the wall in front of you.

Dog Pose with Chair-Stand with your feet hip-width apart. Face the seat of your chair. Bend and place your palms on the seat should-width apart. Straighten your arms and lift your waist, hips, and knees just a few inches above the chair. Now turn your arms out and curve your trunk back between them. Bring your coccyx, sacrum, and lumbar spine forward. Keep that butt tight! Stretch the front of your body from you pubis. Raise both your sternum and ribs. Keep those shoulders back. Press your shoulder blades and dorsal spine in.

Hands in Prayer Behind Back-Stand in Mountain (tadasana). Bring your palms together behind your back with your fingers pointing down. Now turn your fingers up and raise the prayer position as high as possible between your shoulder blades.

Now, relax. One way to relax is to do the corpse pose (shavasana). To do the corpse pose, lie flat on your back with your arms relaxed along the sides of your torso. Keep your palms facing upward. Inhale and exhale through your nose.

The program is simple and you've probably noticed that some of the postures are so basic, that they can be done at your desk. So instead of grabbing a soda during your next break, do these simple postures. Your hands and wrists will thank you.