

Repetitive Strain Injury to the Wrist or Hand

Repetitive strain injuries are injuries that cause pain in the muscles, tendons and nerves that are often caused from overusing the area and repeated movement. Type 1 RSI is when a doctor is able to diagnose a recognized condition from your list of symptoms. It is often identified by inflammation and swelling in the tendons and muscles.

Type 2 RSI is when the doctor isn't able to diagnose the medical condition based upon your symptoms. Often times this is because there aren't any obvious symptoms, beyond that of pain. Type 2 is also termed non-specific pain syndrome.

Repetitive Strain Injury to the Wrist or Hand Anatomy

The arm is a complex system of muscles, bones, vessels and nerves. It extends from the shoulder down to the fingertips. Muscles in the forearms form tendons that goes into the wrist, and attach on to the fingers. Many of these tendons are prone to repetitive strain injuries, with the thumb tendons being most commonly affected, along with the tendons at the elbow.

How to Treat a Repetitive Strain Injury to the Wrist or Hand:

1. Rest

Identify the activity that seems to be causing you pain and see what you can do to eliminate it from your routine. Your wrist and hand need time to rest and heal from being used too much in an uncomfortable way.

2. Ice

Apply ice to the area for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. Make sure to wrap the ice in a thin towel to prevent an ice burn.

3. Steroid Injections

These injections can help to reduce inflammation in the affected region.

4. Manual Therapy

Osteopathy and chiropractic to the upper back and neck can be very useful for improving posture and upper body biomechanics. Massage to the forearm muscles and wrist tendons can help reduce pain and muscle tightness. Physiotherapy exercises can strengthen the area. Ultrasound and acupuncture can also help with chronic pain.

Tips:

- Avoid doing any activity for an extended period of time without resting.
- Refrain from using vibrating equipment as it can cause the nerves in the hand to become injured or compressed.
- Try to remain as stress-free as hunching your shoulders can aggravate the problem.
- Avoid activities requiring you to work in an uncomfortable position. Always practice proper posture whenever sitting or standing.
- Refrain from doing any activity that involves an excessive amount of force, such as lifting an object that is too heavy.

- Try to make sure your work station is as comfortable as possible to prevent an injury from occurring in the first place.
- Swop sides if you think your mouse clicking is aggravating the problem. Using your mouse on the opposite side will take a few days to get used to but can help.
- A wrist or elbow support can help take pressure off the tendons.