



**PETER  
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PLASTIC SURGEON

# Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

## What is it?

Carpal tunnel syndrome is caused by a build up of pressure within the bony and fibrous tunnel (carpal tunnel) which carries tendons and a major nerve (median nerve) to the hand and fingers. When pressure occurs in this tunnel the nerve is starved of blood and symptoms of tingling, numbness and even pain may occur. These symptoms are often worse at night.

There are a number of conservative methods available to treat carpal tunnel syndrome, including splinting to keep the wrist in a non-aggravating position during sleep, anti-inflammatory medications, or cortisone injections into the wrist to relieve the inflammation which causes carpal tunnel compression. Usually these do not provide more than temporary relief.

If conservative methods fail to control symptoms of carpal tunnel compression, surgical decompression can be performed. This simple operation involves division of the carpal tunnel fibrous portion (flexor retinaculum) which decreases carpal tunnel pressure and often provides instant relief from pain and symptoms. The ligament heals, creating a bridge between the divided area and increasing the overall size of the carpal tunnel. Mr Callan uses only a two-centimetre incision to divide the ligament and provide relief.