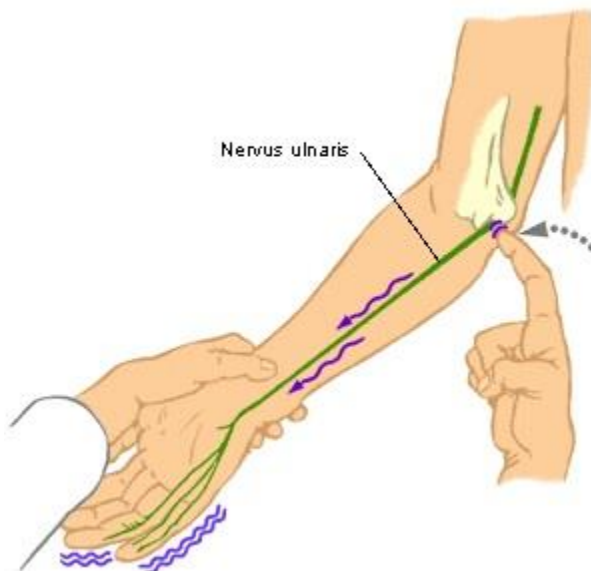




Cubital Tunnel Syndrome

What is Cubital Tunnel Syndrome?

The ulnar nerve gives feeling to the ring and little fingers and powers to the muscles of the hand. The nerve passes through a tunnel made up of the bones of the elbow and the forearm muscles – this is called the cubital tunnel. Symptoms occur when the ulnar nerve is restricted by pressure in the cubital tunnel.



Cubital Tunnel Syndrome - Symptoms

- Numbness, tingling and pain over the little and ring fingers (worse when the elbow is bent for long periods)
- Weaker grip, clumsiness, easily dropping things
- Shrinking of the hand muscles
- Little and ring fingers may become bent and gradually unable to straighten

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Cubital Tunnel Syndrome - Causes and Risk Factors

- **Pressure:** The nerve has little padding over it – direct pressure can press on the nerve
- **Stretching:** Keeping the elbow bent for a long time can stretch the nerve – this can happen during sleep
- **Anatomy:** Sometimes the nerve does not stay in place and snaps back and forth over a bony bump as the elbow moves – this can irritate the nerve. Abnormal swellings within the cubital tunnel may also press on the nerve

How to relieve the pain

- Avoid actions that cause symptoms such as pressure/leaning on the elbow
- Take breaks in between work
- Use elbow pads
- Wrap towels loosely around the elbow
- Position pillows to keep the elbow straight when sleeping
- Wear a splint to avoid bending of the elbow
 - Many different types of splints are available



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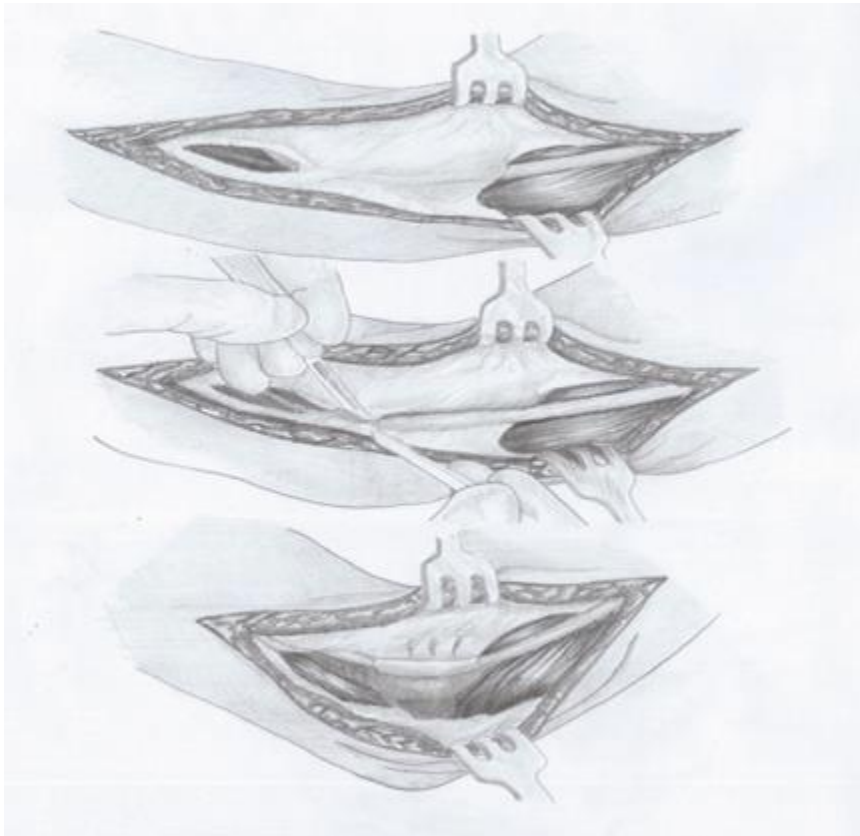
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Cubital Tunnel Syndrome - Diagnosis

Nerve conduction studies can be used to check how well the nerve conducts electrical signals. X-rays may be ordered to look for any arthritis or abnormal bony anatomy. MRI or CT may be used to look for any structures that may be pressing on the nerve.

Cubital Tunnel Syndrome - Treatments



Your care team may suggest the following surgery:

- **Cubital tunnel release:** Release the nerve
- **Anterior transposition:** Move the nerve to the front of the elbow
- **Medial epicondylectomy:** Remove part of the bone

Therapy may be needed after surgery. The time the nerve takes to recover can vary according to each individual. If your symptoms are severe, the surgery and therapy session may not be able to relieve the condition totally.

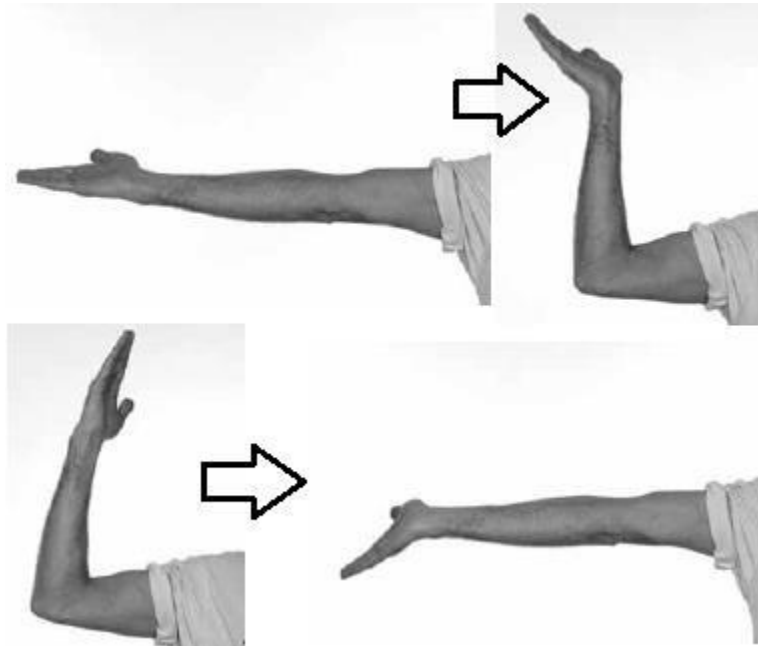
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Cubital Tunnel Syndrome - Other Information

Stretching and nerve gliding exercises



Exercise A: Move your elbow from straight to bent

- Start with your elbow as straight as possible
- Slowly bend your elbow toward you as you tilt your wrist back
- Repeat 3-5 times, in a slow, continuous motion

Exercise B: Move your elbow from bent to straight

- Keep your wrist bent backwards throughout
- Repeat 3-5 times, in a slow, continuous motion

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