

Endoscopic Carpal Tunnel Decompression

It is recommended that you have your carpal tunnel(s) decompressed by an endoscopic technique. This method differs from the standard release of the tight ligament across the front of your wrist. The operation is done by inserting a video telescope across the front of the wrist joint, and the tight ligament which is compressing the nerve is cut by specially designed knives. The final result of the technique is the same as with the open carpal tunnel decompression, but the skin does not need to be divided across the front of the hand.

Advantages

The main advantage of this technique is that after the procedure there is not a tender scar across the ball part of the hand. This allows earlier movement and the much smaller wounds allow removal of the dressing after only a few days. Thus, both hands can be operated on at the same time if necessary and usually with less inconvenience. The decreased wound pain allows earlier return to work and often heavy activities can be recommended within a few weeks.

A further advantage has been a marked reduction in the amount of analgesia required post operatively.

Disadvantages

The main disadvantage is that the technique is technically more demanding. Theoretically adjacent structures including nerves and tendons are at risk of being cut. Obviously great care is taken to avoid these complications. In my opinion these structures can also be at risk with the open technique.

If I am not happy about the view of these structures via the telescope, I proceed to the open operation and abandon the use of the telescope. It is rare for this to be the case.

If you wish to discuss the advantages and disadvantages with me again before your operation, please let me know.

You are under no obligation to have your operation by this new technique. I am prepared to perform the operation using the open technique.