

Caution and common sense go hand-in-hand.



New York Life Group Benefit Solutions knows that going back to work after a wrist or hand injury can be stressful. If you're feeling anxious about returning to your regular work activities, please use the information below to help you understand common causes of wrist injuries, tips to stay healthy, and do's and don'ts for taking care of your wrist.

Wrist risks.

- › Repetitive motion issues are very common in the hands, wrists, elbows, and shoulders.
- › Tingling, numbness, and pain in the hands are known to be common during pregnancy, especially in the last trimester. These problems can usually be a symptom of Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS), and they typically resolve after pregnancy.
- › Pregnancy, diabetes, and other disorders that can compress the nerves have been attributed to increased risk for CTS. CTS is also a more common diagnosis for adults with jobs that require repetitive motion, like assembly work.

Stay strong. Stay healthy.

Activities with forceful or repetitive activity or motion, twisting or unnatural motion, or use of vibrating equipment increase the risk for a repetitive motion injury. You can reduce your risk—and any pain or weakness you may already have—by taking a few simple steps:

- › Proper body mechanics are key to preventing CTS—pay attention to your daily routine to notice activities that increase your risk.
- › How you arrange your work space can help prevent CTS. Office ergonomics focuses on how a workstation is set up, including the placement of your desk, computer monitor, paperwork, chair, and other tools, such as a computer keyboard and mouse. Applying the same ideas can help you outside of work as well.
- › Take frequent breaks to rest, stretch, change positions, or alternate repetitive movements with another activity.
- › Many health conditions and diseases make you more likely to develop carpal tunnel symptoms. So, if you exercise, stay at a healthy weight, control other health conditions such as arthritis and diabetes, and avoid smoking, you can help prevent CTS.



The do's and don'ts of wrist care.

No matter what type of work you do, here are some basic tips for caring for your wrists on the job.

	Do's	Don'ts
Computer work If you sit in front of a computer all day, follow these tips:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Place the keyboard right under your hands, with your wrists and forearms straight and parallel to the floor.› When you type, keep your wrists straight, with your hands a little higher than your wrists. Relax your shoulders when your arms are at your sides.› Keep your elbows close to your body and bent at a 90° angle.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Don't continually lean hands or wrists on wrist rest.› Don't use a gel pad that forces a bend in your wrists.› Don't stay in one position at your keyboard for a long time without stretching.
Tips for other types of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Your wrists and hands should be in line with your arms. Position your work at waist height or slightly lower if you have to exert force.› Organize your work so that you can change your position now and then while you stay in a comfortable posture.› Use ergonomically correct equipment and tools.› If you can, switch hands often when you repeat movements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">› Don't twist or bend your wrists for long periods of time.› Don't ignore discomfort or try to "power through it."› Don't use just your fingers to hold objects. Use your whole hand.

Ask for help.

It's not always easy to ask someone for help. But in your case, with a wrist injury, asking for assistance may promote a faster recovery and prevent another injury.

If you need help lifting something, ask a coworker to lend a hand. And, if you need to make changes to your job to avoid injury, work with your doctor and your manager to see what options are available to you.

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New York Life Insurance Company, 51 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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