



DR CHEN TU PROTOCOL OPEN CARPAL TUNNEL RELEASE

Post-operative instructions



Protect the palm wound, keep it dry and get the hand moving early.

DAY 0–2

MOVE EARLY AND CONTROL SWELLING

- Keep the dressing on and dry
- Elevate the hand for the first 24–48 hours.
- Start finger, thumb and gentle wrist movement today.
- Use the hand for light tasks as comfort allows.
- Tubigrip is optional for light compression and protection.

Every 1–2 hours while awake:
5–10 gentle reps

Add wrist bends
Do not force

IMPORTANT

- × No forceful grip or heavy lifting
- × No direct pressure through the palm
- × Do not wet or remove dressings
- × Remove Tubigrip if it feels tight



Straight • Hook

Tabletop

Full fist

DAY 2–14

WOUND CARE AND LIGHT USE

- Do not remove the dressing.
- Keep it dry until 2 weeks or review—whichever comes first.
- The buried dissolving stitch does not need routine removal.
- Continue all exercises and aim for a full, comfortable fist.
- Light typing, eating and dressing are encouraged as comfortable.



Thumb away

Each fingertip

Across palm

Tubigrip may be worn over the dressing when out. Spares are supplied. Remove it if wet, tight, rolled or causing tingling, numbness or colour change.

2+ WEEKS

RETURN TO FUNCTION

- After dressings are off and the wound is closed, wash normally and start scar massage.
- Weeks 2–4: build household tasks and lifting toward 2–3 kg as comfortable.
- Weeks 4–6: progress lifting toward 5 kg, light gardening and gym work.
- From 6–8 weeks: build shoveling, heavier weights and manual work.
- Avoid forceful palm pressure such as push-ups until comfortable.



Elevate early

Light daily use

Scar massage

Tenderness around the scar or heel of the palm is common and may take several weeks or months to settle. Build pressure gradually.

TYPICAL MILESTONES

1

DRIVE: 1–2 WEEKS

- Wound covered and grip comfortable.
- Turn the wheel and react in an emergency.
- No sedating pain medicine.

2

AT 2 WEEKS

- Dressing off at review or 2 weeks.
- Buried dissolving stitch does not need removal.
- Start scar care once healed.
- Until review, lift no more than about 1 kg.

3

2–4 WEEKS

- Build lifting toward 2–3 kg if comfortable.
- Household chores and light work.
- Avoid forceful grip and palm pressure.

4

6–8 WEEKS

- Start shoveling and heavier gardening.
- Build gym weights and manual work.
- Increase gradually—pain is your guide.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER



Dressings dry: 2 weeks



Drive from 1–2 weeks



≤1 kg until 2 weeks



Heavy tasks 6–8 weeks

CONSIDER HAND THERAPY IF:

- swelling or stiffness limits a full fist
- scar sensitivity or pain prevents normal use
- thumb weakness or poor dexterity is troublesome
- work or function is not progressing