



THE COST OF INJURY: THE WRIST

BY WRNW

This month's installment of *The Cost of Injury** focuses on a part of your body with an abundance of bones, ligaments, joints, and tendons - the wrist. With so many working parts, it's no wonder wrist injuries happen easily and with glaring frequency. Let's dive into common wrist injuries, the costs associated with them, and how you can avoid both!



Wrist Sprain For mild and moderate wrist **sprains**, the injury can be dealt with at home with icing, compression and elevation, or in more serious cases a splint might be necessary. In this scenario, though, a doctor's visit to include an x-ray is usually necessary to make sure you've avoided a fracture. Depending on insurance benefits, these treatments may cost \$500 or less.

Wrist Fracture Non-surgical treatment for a typical kind of wrist fracture - an ulnar styloid fracture - begins to add higher costs. \$2,500 for a fracture needing a cast. \$1,000-\$2,000 for a potential emergency room visit. Not to mention medical professional treatment costs ranging from \$250-\$900. Without insurance these median costs land around \$6,000. Oh, did we mention a cast will likely need to stay in place for approximately 12 weeks?



Carpal Tunnel Syndrome The carpal tunnel is the narrow passageway surrounded by bones and ligaments on the palm side of the hand. Carpal tunnel syndrome is a common condition in the hand or arm that causes weakness, tingliness, numbness, and pain. It is caused by pressure on the median nerve. The cost for surgery varies from \$2,500 in an outpatient facility, to \$5,300 in the hospital. According to **Cost Helper Health**, the typical cost in 2020 was \$6,928 per hand without insurance. With insurance, however, the costs drop significantly to around \$1,000 (to include aftercare, therapy, and rehab). Surgery may also keep industrial athletes away from their usual work for as much as 6 to 12 weeks.



This is the point where we, as injury *prevention* specialists, will shout clearly enough for those of you to hear in the back - non-surgical treatment options are available! While surgery is not always out of the question for severe cases, carpal tunnel surgeries are becoming more and more boilerplate and inexpensive. So if surgery is avoidable, what does that mean you can do? Many carpal tunnel syndrome symptoms can be relieved with simple measures like the following:

- Reducing your force and relaxing your grip.
- Take short, frequent breaks. Gently stretch and bend your hands/wrist periodically.
- Watch your form - try to avoid bending your wrist all the way up or all the way down. The best position is a relaxed middle position. If you work on a keyboard keep it at elbow height or slightly lower.
- Improve your posture! Sitting with your shoulder rounded forward shortens the neck and shoulder muscle which in turn can compress nerves in the neck.
- Change your computer mouse - it should be comfortable and should not strain your wrist.
- Wear a wrist splint while sleeping
- Do exercises to keep the **median nerve mobile**
- Avoid activities that aggravate your symptoms

LOOKING FOR
ONSITE RESOURCES?
CHECK THESE OUT!

Work Right NW is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialist's in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

Have questions? Make an appointment and visit a Work Right Clinician at your Wellness Center!

*Keep Reading! *Cost of Injury* - [The Knee](#), [The Shoulder](#), and [The Back](#)

