

Ask Jon Eakes

# Solving Computer Mouse Wrist Strain

Last Updated: Tuesday, April 6th, 2021, Created: Thursday, April 9th, 2015

Tired or damaged hands from computer mouse use

Years ago I had a serious problem caused by overwork with a computer mouse dealing with very detailed graphics work for several days non-stop. My hand was going numb and losing its functions because of my “death grip” on that little mouse. The doctor said to operate for carpal tunnel syndrome; open up the passageway for the nerves running into the hand. Apparently the medical industry doesn’t completely understand the carpal tunnel syndrome with Wikipedia saying that the medical industry speculates it to be caused by a combination of genetic and environmental factors. But I knew the cause of my particular problem. The muscle that was squeezing across the bottom of the palm was squeezing in and closing the carpal tunnel, the passageway for all the nerves in the hand. I have had similar but less critical problems from simply squeezing tools too tightly, especially squeezing and not moving for long periods of time, like in working with the wood lathe.

No Surgery, thank you

Surgery didn’t really sit well with me so I found a chiropractor who specialized in non-surgical work, stretching and relaxing the muscle causing the closing in of the tunnel; specifically reversing the action that caused the problem. Dr. Yves Roy even had a machine specifically for this problem, apparently the only one in Quebec. It worked and when I asked him if he could give me some exercises to do at home to help the process along he had me put my hand flat out on the table, then lean forward. That felt much like the machine, but didn’t spread the palm as much as his machine and hand manipulations did. So of course I set about building something to allow me to do what his two hands did to spread that muscle in the bottom of my palm. Regular maintenance countering the mouse strain has not eliminated that over-worked feeling in my right hand, but has kept me fully functional without having to go back often to have Dr. Roy do it for me.

The “Counter Stress” stretching device

My Palm Stretcher is simply two 1 inch diameter dowels 9 inches long attached together with a metal plate mortised into the ends of the dowels and locked loosely with bolts and nuts. The wood is covered with 1 inch plumbing pipe insulation. That’s it, that’s all.

Open the angle so that you can comfortably rest your thumb and little finger on the foam with your forearm flat to the table or floor. The three other fingers will fall naturally between the bars. If your hand is hurting, that is perhaps all you want to do for a few days.

When you can do it with a stretching feeling but not a painful pulling, lift your arm up and forward, keeping your fingers on the foam. Be gentle, always pushing the limit but never causing pain. Careful attention to that borderline and patience over time is what makes muscles grow, relax and regain flexibility – that’s what I learned from Meir Schneider, a natural healing expert from San Francisco that has helped me with many things and even made an appearance years ago on my HGTV show to talk about controlling arthritis so that as you age, you can continue to work with your hands.

Real Ergonomic computer mice

As for computer mice – For traveling I do use an extra small regular mouse, but don’t use it a lot. For my general office work, I use an extra-large track ball sunk into my worktable so I simply don’t have anything to put an unconscious “death grip” on it. And for my graphics station where a track ball is almost useless, the very competent people at ErgoCanada.com have talked me into trying the Evoluent VerticalMouse after showing me this article on Static Grip Force When Using the Mouse

from the Ergopedia.ca.

Stretching, relaxation and good blood circulation can cure the “incurable”

So from knowledge gained from some work with the San Francisco School for Self-Healing that the body can recuperate from numerous “incurable” problems with stretching, relaxation and good blood circulation; to an avant-gardist chiropractor with a wrist stretching machine; and the most helpful and dedicated Canadian ergonomic computer store I have ever found – I may keep this old body running for a long time still. All I have done is add two sticks of cushioned wood to the mix for my wrist maintenance.

**Keywords:**

Computer, Schools, Ergonomics, Courses, Environmental, Health, Maintenance, Hands, Wrist

**Article 2236**

[www.joneakes.com](http://www.joneakes.com)