

# Electroacupuncture may help relieve pain from carpal tunnel syndrome

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Electroacupuncture combined with nighttime splinting may help alleviate pain from chronic carpal tunnel syndrome, according to a randomized controlled trial published in *CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal)*.

"We found that treatment using electroacupuncture provided small improvements in symptoms, disability, function, dexterity and pinch strength among patients with chronic mild to moderate symptoms of primary carpal tunnel syndrome when combined with nocturnal splinting," writes Dr. Vincent Chung, Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care and the Hong Kong Institute of Integrative Medicine, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, with coauthors.

Carpal tunnel syndrome affects about 3% of the general population and can limit daily activities in people, causing substantial work-related issues and resulting in disability claims. Night splinting and local steroid injection are two commonly recommended treatments for mild to moderate carpal tunnel syndrome.

The study, conducted by researchers in Hong Kong, compared the use of electroacupuncture and night splinting to splinting alone in relieving mild to moderate pain from carpal tunnel syndrome over 17 weeks. Patients were randomly assigned to the two groups, and of the 181 who started, 174 completed the study. They reported pain based on a symptom scale commonly used to assess pain from carpal [tunnel syndrome](#).

Patients who received electroacupuncture combined with nighttime splinting reported better symptom relief at 5 and 17 weeks than the control group. The study also showed that splinting alone did not alleviate [pain](#) or improve function.

The researchers concluded that electroacupuncture combined with nocturnal splinting has the potential to provide some relief to patients with chronic mild to moderate discomfort from [carpal tunnel syndrome](#).

**More information:** *Canadian Medical Association Journal*,  
[www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.151003](http://www.cmaj.ca/lookup/doi/10.1503/cmaj.151003)

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