

## WHAT IS REPETITIVE STRESS INJURY ?



R.S.I. stands for Repetitive Stress Injury, also known as Repetitive Strain Disorder or Cumulative Trauma Disorder (CTD). This condition is a disease of the musculoskeletal system produced by a gradual build up of tiny amounts of damage. The damage is a result of repetitive motions and/or sustained postures, focused to a narrow range of parts of the musculoskeletal system.

Although the disorder is called "Repetitive Stress", repetitive motion is not actually the only problem. Although repeated movements cause friction wear damage in tissues, it is lack of mobility which is the main cause. Sustained postures keep the blood supply away from certain tissues, which reduces the rate of repair of those areas. As the tendons, ligaments and muscles become less and less flexible because of these held postures, the blood flow becomes even more constricted. These immobile connective tissues may also impinge upon nerves causing tingling, numbness and eventually nerve damage.



Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) is one form of RSI. The carpal tunnel receives its name from the 8 bones in the wrist, called carpals, which form a tunnel-like structure. The tunnel is filled with flexor tendons that control finger movement. It provides a pathway for the median nerve to reach sensory cells in the hand. Repetitive motion and sustained flexing and extension of the wrist may cause a thickening of the protective sheaths that surround each of the tendons. The swollen tendon sheaths, or tenosynovitis, apply increased pressure on the median nerve and produce Carpal Tunnel



Syndrome.

In the last decade there has been a striking increase in the number of RSI's reported in the workplace. But RSI is nothing new; for example, silversmiths in the 1700's reported many wrist problems caused by the repetitive aspects of their trade. The number of RSI cases are increasing because more people are specializing in jobs that require them to repeat the same movements hour after hour. While keyboard and mouse users are especially at risk, all industries are affected and RSI claims are costing businesses billions of dollars every year in absenteeism, medical claims and retraining. Businesses and individuals must take immediate action to eliminate this threat in our lives.

