

Intersection Syndrome

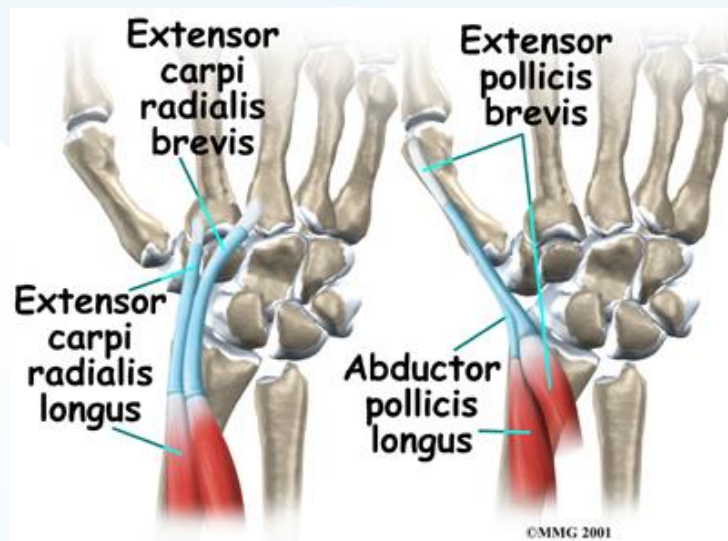
Intersection syndrome proves to be a painful condition of the wrist and forearm. It can affect those individuals who perform repeated actions of the wrist, such as canoeists, weight lifters or downhill skiers. Heavy shoveling or raking can also lead to the syndrome.

If you overuse the wrist tendons, the lining might end up becoming inflamed from the constant rubbing against the thumb muscles. As it becomes more inflamed and irritated, it thickens and swells. You will feel pain when moving the wrist because the swollen tendons will rub against the thumb muscles.

The wrist tendons can be strained by an activity causing the wrist to curl in and down toward the thumb. These movements are common in skiers when planting their poles deep into the snow. The same movement exists when pulling a rake against the ground.

Intersection Syndrome Anatomy

The pain from the syndrome is often felt at the top part of the forearm, roughly three inches above the wrist. It is at this spot that two muscles are connected to the thumb cross over and the two underlying wrist tendons. Those two muscles in the cross over are responsible for controlling the thumb. These muscles begin at the forearm, cross over the tendons in the wrist and connect to the back portion of the thumb. When they work, they will pull the thumb back and out.



How to Treat Intersection Syndrome:

1. Rest

It is imperative that you change or stop participating in those activities that are causing you pain. Take regular breaks when performing any repetitive thumb and hand movements. Avoid grasping, wringing, twisting or turning movements within the wrist if you are doing them repeatedly. For those who are downhill skiers, relief can be found by avoiding any heavy planting and dragging of the poles by using a shorter pole or changing the grip.

2. Splint

Keep the wrist neutrally aligned. Keep it in a straight line without any bending. A splint will help to keep the lower joints and the wrist from being able to move. By resting the muscles and tendons in the wrist, the area can begin healing efficiently.

3. Anti-Inflammatory Medication

An anti-inflammatory medication will help to control the swelling and alleviate some of the symptoms. Common medications include aspirin and ibuprofen. Seek advice from your doctor.

4. Ice

Apply ice to the area for 5-10 minutes at a time three to five times per day. Ice will help to decrease any swelling in the area and alleviate some of the pain. Make sure to wrap the ice in a towel to eliminate the chance of getting an ice burn.

5. Coaching

Get your technique analyzed by a coach to make sure your biomechanics are good, and you are not placing too much strain on your hands and wrists.

Tips:

- When doing any activities, try to maintain a healthy body and wrist alignment.
- Limit the amount of activities you do requiring a repeated motion of the thumb and wrist.
- When non-surgical treatment is successful, expect to see an improvement of your pain and symptoms within four to six weeks.
- It might be necessary to continue wearing a splint to control symptoms throughout the healing process and beyond.
- Depending on what your current job or hobbies are, make sure to exercise caution to prevent unnecessary injuries from happening.